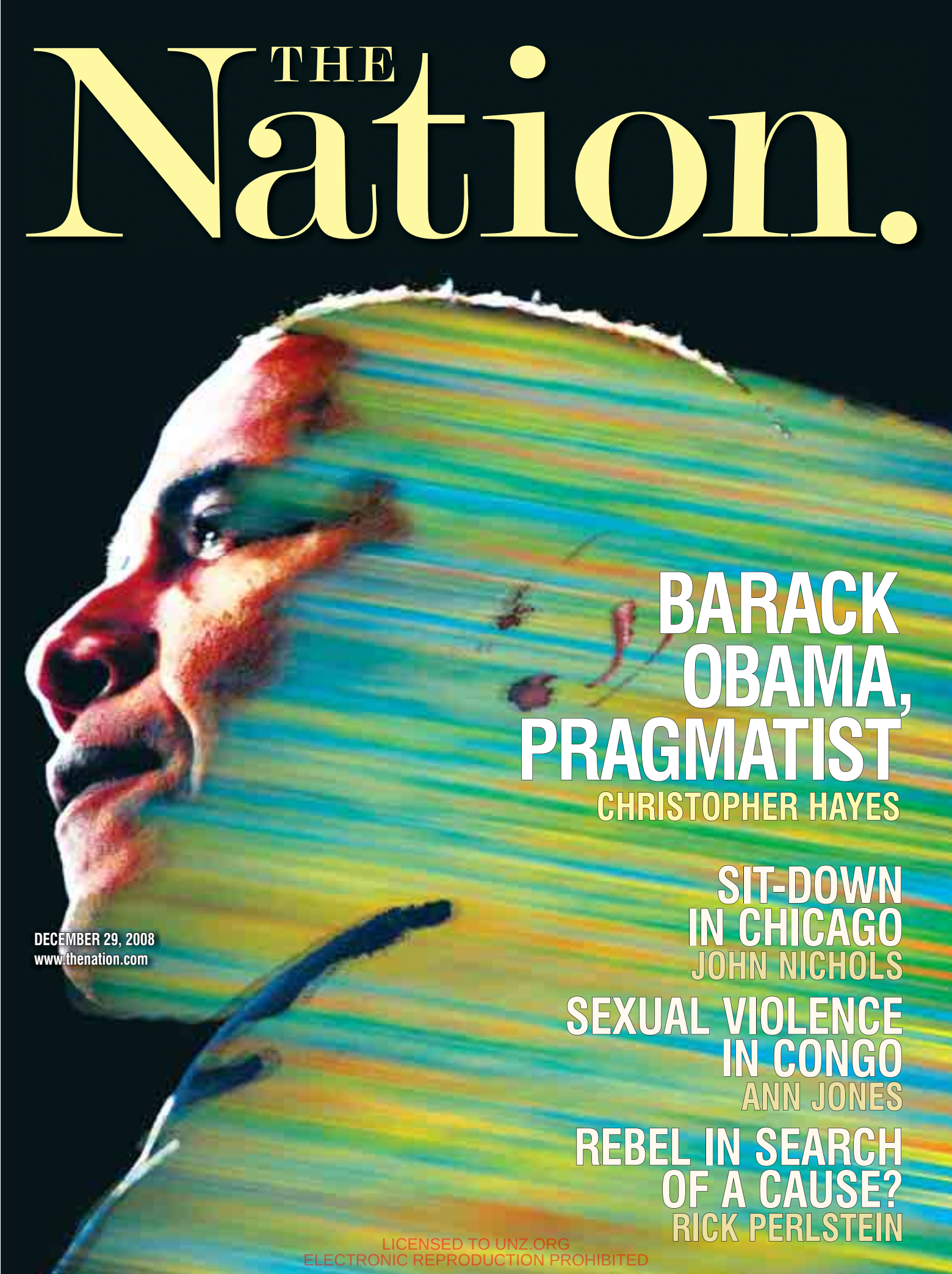
THE Nation.



BARACK OBAMA, PRAGMATIST
CHRISTOPHER HAYES

SIT-DOWN IN CHICAGO
JOHN NICHOLS

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONGO
ANN JONES

REBEL IN SEARCH OF A CAUSE?
RICK PERLSTEIN

DECEMBER 29, 2008
www.thenation.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The abolitionists pushed Lincoln.

The labor movement pushed Roosevelt.

The civil rights movement pushed Johnson.

Help us push Obama.

Help push him toward fairer taxation, public investment and greater corporate accountability.

If you're in the top 5% of income or wealth and you care about economic justice, you belong in the Responsible Wealth movement.

Why you? Because your wealth or success makes you the kind of man-bites-dog story the media loves. You're guaranteed a hearing when you defend the estate tax...

Or push for progressive taxes to close state budget gaps...

Or demand shareholder "Say on Pay" and other limits on obscene CEO pay...

Or explain how public investment fuels your business success.

You *know* President Obama will be hearing from the status quo. Make sure he hears your voice for change!

RESPONSIBLE WEALTH
Responsible Wealth is a project of United for a Fair Economy
www.ResponsibleWealth.org
617-423-2148

Letters

Colorblind?

New York City
Your lead editorial, "The First 100 Days" [Dec. 1], issues a welcome list of ambitious initiatives that would "get a real start on repairing our nation," including a renewed war on poverty. No mention, however, of race and racism, despite the fact that a mobilized black community provided the margin between victory and defeat. A colorblind approach will not address the distinct problems African-Americans confront: occupational apartheid that leaves almost half of black men in cities like Chicago and Washington without jobs; the evisceration of affirmative action by all branches of government; mass incarceration that exceeds 2 million, two-thirds of them black or Latino, often for violation of drug laws; rampant discrimination in housing; a scurrilous lack of enforcement of civil rights laws, especially Title VIII. Can we "repair our nation" without confronting the legacy of slavery? Is the colorblind left going to participate in the charade of using Obama to sidestep racial issues? And is the Democratic Party willing to risk a backlash from blacks who feel betrayed by the election of "the first black President"?
Stephen Steinberg

What We Did in Vietnam

Laguna Woods, Calif.
Nick Turse's "A My Lai a Month" [Dec. 1] is the best I've ever read regarding the truth of what we did in Vietnam. I served as an Army medic in Vietnam at a place called Bearcat from February to October 1969. I was attached to a unit that supported one of the main assault helicopter companies that did so much of the murder in the Delta for the 9th Infantry operations during the time of Operation Speedy Express. That unit was the 240th Assault Helicopter Company. I recall a door gunner who was known to have killed at least 500, and I recall talk about atrocities committed by the unit. I have many memories.
Jim Gibson

Shelter Island, N.Y.
I have never heard of Speedy Express, but I do not doubt this report. I was an officer in the 3/47th of the 9th Infantry from December 1967 to June 1968 in the 2nd Brigade under General Ewell. Body count was very important, as was the number of patients we treated as part of the Medical Civil Action Program. The counts were never very accurate, and the numbers were more important than the help we tried to provide to the locals.
Pieter Ruig

Gainesville, Fla.
I sent this article out to my VFP/IVAW list. Robert McNamara, in the film *The Fog of War*, says we killed 3.4 million Vietnamese. They died somewhere, and we were the ones who killed them.
Scott Camil

Ossining, N.Y.
In 1993 I published *Then the Americans Came*, a book of interviews with Vietnamese victims of the war. I am so encouraged to see that an American historian is documenting the atrocities we committed there. I hope one day Nick Turse's work will be required reading in schools (mine too, for that matter). His information was not news to me—and shouldn't be news to anyone who had a TV set in the 1960s and '70s. But the specifics (the perps, the cover-up, etc.) are so important, and so horrifying. I visited many "My Lais." Everyone I encountered in Vietnam knew about or survived the slaughter that occurred everywhere the Americans and their allies touched down, and the bombing slaughter everywhere else. This article made me furious all over again. Thank you.
Martha Hess

Brockport, N.Y.
I recall my 1968–69 experience with the 196th LIB. As the liaison with the 196th in Hiep Duc, my biggest challenge was stopping the atrocities by US troops in the village. I finally stopped using the crypto device on my radio to call in reports and begging for intervention. When I called these in in the clear, the killing of civilians diminished. Our fire base saw the daily use of a scope to spot movement in the valley and the use of the quad 50 or other weapons to kill whatever moved. A My Lai a month in the Delta? A My Lai a week throughout

letters@thenation.com

(continued on page 24)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation.
since 1865

Stimulus From Below

In order to appreciate the breadth and ambition of the economic stimulus program Barack Obama has outlined, it's useful to look back to where the debate was just last month. The weeks leading up to the election had been dominated by economic debates at once facile and irrelevant. John McCain argued that a top marginal tax rate of 39 percent was a stalking horse for socialism, and pundits—from Jim Lehrer to David Broder—pushed the perverse, bizarre notion that the economic crisis meant that the next president would have to tighten the federal belt.

EDITORIAL

Such lunacy prompted us to write on October 8 that "the only way to relieve economic suffering, create jobs and restore stable growth is for the federal government to step in and bolster demand by spending money. Lots of it." A month later, we published an article by University of Massachusetts economist Robert Pollin that spelled out how the money should be spent in order to maximize job creation, increase the long-term productive capacity of the economy and reduce our collective carbon footprint. It's these priorities that are reflected in Obama's initial plan, which focuses on school modernization, energy efficiency in public buildings, healthcare information technology, broadband and basic infrastructure. It's not a coincidence. As the *New York Times* noted, Pollin's work served as the "blueprint" for the plan.

As a basic outline for what a smart, effective, progressive public works project should look like, Obama's proposal is more than promising: it's stirring. But—and you knew there'd be a *but*—economic management at this crucial juncture is a matter of triage. If the stimulus is aimed at the millions who have slipped or are about to slip from the middle class into poverty, it must also include support for the millions of Americans who are slipping from working poverty to abject penury, from penury to desperation.

The statistics are terrifying. In 2007 more than 37 million Americans were living in poverty—that's 12.5 percent of the population subsisting (or not) on less than $21,200 a year for a family of four. That shameful figure doesn't take into account this year's rise in unemployment—when 1.9 million Americans lost their jobs. Food stamp caseloads rose by 2.6 million people between August 2007 and August 2008; in twenty-five states, at least one in five children is receiving food stamps. According to the USDA's annual report on food security, nearly one in eight Americans (36.2 million adults and children) were "food insecure," meaning that they had difficulty getting enough food, due to a lack of resources. Social service agencies, shelters and food banks around the country are reporting spikes in the number of people requesting services, just as many of those agencies face dwindling donations and cutbacks.

As Pollin wrote in his article, "Recessions create widespread human suffering. Minimizing the suffering has to be the top priority in fighting the recession.... By stabilizing the pocketbooks of distressed households, these measures also help people pay their mortgages and pump money into consumer markets."

This is why increased food stamp benefits, rental assistance and aid to state governments must be at the heart of any stimulus package. Extending unemployment benefits—which fewer than 40 percent of the unemployed now receive—to laid-off low-wage and part-time workers would provide an immediate jolt to the economy. We understand why it's smart politics to pitch all economic policy in terms of the middle class: the poor, as they say, are always with us. But if the economy continues to deteriorate, the poor won't just be with us, they'll *be* us. And they'll be much harder to ignore.

Inside

2 Letters

Editorials & Comment

3 **Stimulus From Below**
4 **Sit-Down in Chicago**
JOHN NICHOLS
5 **Noted**
6 **Stop Senator No**
WILLIAM GREIDER
7 **Beware School 'Reformers'**
ALFIE KOHN
8 **Editorial Malpractice**
MARK AMES
9 **Hard Times Without Studs**
TOM ENGELHARDT

Columns

6 **Deadline Poet**
On the Auctioning Off of Obama's Seat
CALVIN TRILLIN
10 **Diary of a Mad Law Professor**
American Dreams
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS
11 **The Liberal Media**
'Center-Right'? Not Quite…
ERIC ALTERMAN

Articles

13 **The Pragmatist**
What does the label mean for Obama?
CHRISTOPHER HAYES
16 **A Crime Against Society**
Rape destroyed the social fabric of Congo.
ANN JONES
20 **Socialism Is No Longer a Dirty Word**
The case for public ownership.
ANDRÉ SCHIFFRIN
22 **Meddling in Kenya's Elections**
Will Obama change US Africa policy?
KAREN ROTHMYER

Books & the Arts

25 **DAWDY:** Building the Devil's Empire
SUBLETTE: The World That Made New Orleans
JOSHUA JELLY-SCHAPIRO
30 **GRAEBNER:** Patty's Got a Gun
RICK PERLSTEIN
33 **Back Talk:** Thelma Golden
CHRISTINE SMALLWOOD
34 **AYTO AND SIMPSON, EDS.:** Stone the Crows: Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang
DALZELL, ED.: The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English
CALEB CRAIN
35 **Poem Including History** (POEM)
JOSEPH MASSEY

COVER DESIGN BY GENE CASE & STEPHEN KLING/AVENGING ANGELS; ILLUSTRATIONS BY RYAN INZANA AND ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

VOLUME 287, NUMBER 22, DECEMBER 29, 2008
PRINTED DECEMBER 10

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation.

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Katrina vanden Heuvel

PRESIDENT: Teresa Stack

MANAGING EDITOR: Roane Carey
LITERARY EDITOR: John Palattella
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Betsy Reed
SENIOR EDITOR: Richard Lingeman
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Richard Kim
WEB EDITOR: Joan Connell
COPY CHIEF: Judith Long
ASSISTANT LITERARY EDITOR: Miriam Markowitz
COPY EDITOR: Mark Sorkin
ASSISTANT COPY EDITOR: Dave Baker
COPY ASSOCIATE: Lisa Vandepaer
ASSISTANT WEB EDITOR: Adam Howard
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR: Peggy Suttle
INTERNS: Sarah H. Arnold, Julie Bramowitz, Marissa Colón-Margolies, Robert S. Eshelman, Reeve Hamilton, Drew Haxby, Erica Landau, Lucas Mann, Cole Robertson

WASHINGTON: EDITOR: Christopher Hayes; **CORRESPONDENT:** John Nichols

NATIONAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT: William Greider

COLUMNISTS: Eric Alterman, Alexander Cockburn, Naomi Klein, Katha Pollitt, Patricia J. Williams, Gary Younge

DEPARTMENTS: *Architecture*, Jane Holtz Kay; *Art*, Arthur C. Danto; *Corporations*, Robert Sherrill; *Defense*, Michael T. Klare; *Environment*, Mark Hertsgaard; *Films*, Stuart Klawans; *Legal Affairs*, David Cole; *Net Movement*, Ari Melber; *Peace and Disarmament*, Jonathan Schell; *Poetry*, Peter Gizzi; *Sex*, JoAnn Wypijewski; *Sports*, Dave Zirin; *United Nations*, Barbara Crossette; *Deadline Poet*, Calvin Trillin

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Kai Bird, Robert L. Borosage, Stephen F. Cohen, Marc Cooper, Mike Davis, Slavenka Drakulić, Robert Dreyfuss, Susan Faludi, Thomas Ferguson, Doug Henwood, Max Holland, Michael Moore, Christian Parenti, Richard Pollak, Joel Rogers, Karen Rothmyer, Robert Scheer, Herman Schwartz, Bruce Shapiro, Edward Sorel, Gore Vidal, Jon Wiener, Amy Wilentz, Art Winslow

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Ari Berman, Lakshmi Chaudhry, William Deresiewicz, Liza Featherstone, Bob Moser, Eyal Press, Scott Sherman

BUREAUS: *London*, Maria Margaronis and D.D. Guttenplan; *Southern Africa*, Mark Gevisser

EDITORIAL BOARD: Deepak Bhargava, Norman Birnbaum, Barbara Ehrenreich, Richard Falk, Frances FitzGerald, Eric Foner, Philip Green, Lani Guinier, Tom Hayden, Tony Kushner, Elinor Langer, Deborah W. Meier, Toni Morrison, Walter Mosley, Victor Navasky, Pedro Antonio Noguera, Richard Parker, Michael Pertschuk, Elizabeth Pochoda, Marcus G. Raskin, Kristina Rizga, Andrea Batista Schlesinger, David Weir, Roger Wilkins

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, SPECIAL PROJECTS/WEBSITE: Peter Rothberg
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, DEVELOPMENT/ASSOCIATES: Peggy Randall
VICE PRESIDENT, ADVERTISING: Ellen Bollinger
ADVERTISING MANAGER, SMALL DISPLAY, EVENTS, CLASSIFIED: Leigh Novog
WEB SALES MANAGER: Nancy Wildermuth
VICE PRESIDENT, CIRCULATION: Arthur Stupar
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Michelle O'Keefe
CIRCULATION FULFILLMENT MANAGER: Miriam Camp
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Omar Rubio
TYPOGRAPHER/WEB PRODUCER: Sandy McCroskey
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Timothy Don
NATION ASSOCIATES MANAGER: Joliange Wright
PUBLICITY AND SYNDICATION DIRECTOR: Ben Wyskida
EDUCATION/COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Habiba Alcindor
TECHNOLOGY MANAGER: Amiri K. Barksdale
ONLINE DIRECTOR: Jeff Larson
WEB PRODUCER: Kellye Rogers
WEB PRODUCER: Melisa St. Prix
CONTROLLER: Mary van Valkenburg
ASSISTANT TO VICTOR NAVASKY: Mary Taylor Schilling
DATA ENTRY/MAIL COORDINATOR: John Holtz
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT: Kathleen Thomas
RECEPTIONIST/BUSINESS ASSISTANT: Elizabeth Berniak
ADVERTISING ASSISTANT: Kit Gross
CLERK: Shavonne Frazier
ACADEMIC LIAISON: Charles Bittner

PUBLISHER EMERITUS: Victor Navasky

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: E-mail to letters@thenation.com (300-word limit). Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

SUBMISSIONS: Queries only, no manuscripts. Go to www.thenation.com and click on "about," then "submissions" for a query form. Queries may be mailed to The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. SASE for poems.

INTERNET: Selections from the current issue become available Thursday night at www.thenation.com.

Printed on 100% recycled 40% post-consumer acid- and chlorine-free paper, in the USA.

This week at thenation.com

NEWS & ANALYSIS

Katrina vanden Heuvel: The Blagojevich moment

Maria Margaronis: Greece in flames

John Nichols: Corruption in Illinois

Barbara Crossette: Nobel Peace Prize

VIDEO NATION

Jeremy Scahill on Blackwater

PODCAST

Fixing the banking industry

NATION POLL

Most valuable progressive of 2008

Sit-Down in Chicago

When Barack Obama revealed after the election that he was reading a book on Franklin Roosevelt's first 100 days as president, the "new New Deal" discussion went into overdrive. Progressives dared to believe that Obama's presidency might, due to economic necessity and the president-elect's interventionist inclinations, be a reprise of the last extended period when economic fairness was on the agenda.

COMMENT

But there will be no new New Deal if Americans wait for Obama to lead them out of the domestic quagmire into which Bill Clinton and George W. Bush steered the country with a toxic blend of free-trade absolutism, banking deregulation and disdain for industrial and agricultural planning. Just as a well-inclined but cautious Roosevelt needed the prodding of mass movements and militancy to talk the Washington establishment into accepting radical shifts in the economic order, so Obama will need to be able to point to some turbulence at the grassroots.

Remarkably, even before Obama takes office, a plant-closing struggle in his hometown has developed into just the sort of fight that is needed. More remarkably, Obama is responding as FDR might have. After Bank of America—which is expected to pocket as much as $25 billion via Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson's Wall Street bailout—refused to extend operating credit to Republic Windows & Doors, a Chicago-based manufacturer, the firm disregarded federal rules that require sixty days notice of a plant closing and announced that its factory would be shuttered December 5. But instead of going home to a dismal holiday season like hundreds of thousands of other newly unemployed workers, Republic's employees occupied the factory.

United Electrical Workers Local 1110 engaged in a contemporary equivalent of the 1930s sit-down strikes, which led to the rapid expansion of union recognition nationwide and empowered FDR to secure more equitable labor laws. As in the 1930s, UE is objecting not just to a company that may be inclined to shift work out of a unionized plant but to bank policies that encourage those inclinations and federal policies that reward the bankers and fail the workers; stickers worn by UE protesters tell Bank of America: You Got Bailed Out. We Got Sold Out.

"We're going to stay here until we win justice," said Blanca Funes, 55, as she and other strikers shoveled snow and did routine maintenance at the plant, where many of the 250 mostly Latino workers have been employed for decades.

The Chicago protest highlighted a fundamental flaw with Paulson's bailout scheme. Bank of America accepted money that Congress was told would loosen constraints on credit and stimulate the economy. But the bank and other major financial institutions instead used taxpayer dollars to buy smaller banks, provide executive bonuses and pay shareholder dividends. Bank of America initially refused to extend credit to Republic. The company and the union say the bank rejected financial plans to provide workers with vacation and severance pay to which they are legally entitled. The bank says it had no such obligation but then, in negotiations with Republic and UE to end the occupation, sent mixed signals about a willingness to extend some credit. UE statements during the struggle were steadfast and blunt, saying union members sought to "at least get the com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Noted.

AHEAD OF HER TIME: Dorothy Sterling, who died December 1 at 95, never taught at a college or university. But she had a greater impact on how we think about the American past than most academic historians. Obituaries described Sterling as a writer of children's literature, which is fair enough, since most of her thirty-odd books were historical works for young readers. Many were about then virtually unknown figures in the struggle for racial justice, including Underground Railroad heroine **Harriet Tubman**; Quaker abolitionist **Lucretia Mott**; and **Robert Smalls**, a black Congressman from South Carolina after the Civil War.

But this description fails to do justice to the scholarly contribution of this remarkable woman, especially her pioneering work in gathering and publishing documents about the black past. *The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction* (1976) and *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1984) helped to transform our understanding of African-American and women's history. Sterling's biography of **Abby Kelley**, *Ahead of Her Time* (1991), rescued from obscurity a pivotal figure in the struggle against slavery and for women's rights. The title is an apt description not only of the book's subject but also its author. ERIC FONER

CANADIAN FREEZE: Representative democracy was issued a "timeout" in Canada on December 4, when Governor General Michaëlle Jean agreed to suspend Parliament for eight weeks, rescuing Prime Minister **Stephen Harper**'s minority government from imminent defeat.

The crisis began November 27, when in lieu of a stimulus package—Canada is the only OECD country not to offer a stimulus package in response to its deepening economic crisis—the Conservative government offered a hard-right attack on gender and labor rights and a brazen attempt to bankrupt its parliamentary opponents. Included in the government's "fiscal update" was the suspension of federal public-sector workers' right to strike, the cutting of pay equity, the selling of public assets and the slashing of public funding for political parties—sounding the death knell for opposition parties lacking hefty corporate sponsorship.

The opposition parties were duly enraged, not least by a government with the gall to deny the country's slumping economy any public investment, despite carving a $100 million budget surplus out of its public assets and labor. Their response? Unprecedented cooperation and an attempt at representative democracy. On December 1, the leaders of two major opposition parties, the **Liberals** and the left-leaning **New Democratic Party**, announced they had formed a coalition and planned, with the support of the **Bloc Québécois**, to bring down Prime Minister Harper and his Conservatives in a no-confidence vote—and then form a ruling coalition government.

So Harper went running to the governor general for two extra months to control the agenda and advance Conservative hegmony. It's as if the prime minister forgot that being elected by only 38 percent of voters means that 62 percent—the majority—support his opposition. And when Parliament reconvenes on January 26, this opposition will get another chance to prove that the national interest can sometimes trump cutthroat politics. BRETT STORY

SENATE (S)ELECTIONS: It's not just governors like Illinois's scandal-plagued **Rod Blagojevich** who should be barred from making appointments to fill vacant Senate seats. No governor should be allowed to personally select a senator who will have one of 100 votes on every major domestic and foreign issue facing the Republic for at least two years—and, with the benefits of appointed incumbency, perhaps for decades to come.

To be sure, Blagojevich looks to be the worst of the lot. The Illinois governor has been charged by US Attorney **Patrick Fitzgerald** in a breathtaking seventy-six-page complaint that recounts what he described as a "political corruption crime spree" of pay-to-play schemes, including the allegation that "Blagojevich put a 'for sale' sign on the naming of a United States senator."

The charges against Blagojevich recall the reason the US Constitution was changed, almost a century ago, to require the election of US senators. The Seventeenth Amendment established the direct election of senators, taking the power to populate the chamber away from corrupt governors and deal-making legislators. An unfortunate loophole, however, allows governors to appoint senators when vacancies occur—unlike the situation with vacancies in the House, which must be filled by special elections. Only a handful of states—Wisconsin, Oregon and Oklahoma among them—require that an election be held to replace a senator who dies or quits.

With Senate seats vacant or soon to be vacant in Illinois, Delaware and New York, governors have been preparing to make appointments. **Joe Biden**'s Delaware slot will be filled for two years by a placeholder, veteran Biden aide **Ted Kaufman**, setting up one of many potentially competitive contests in 2010. And while New York Governor **David Paterson** has yet to make an appointment to replace Senator **Hillary Clinton**, the names in circulation include Representative **Carolyn Maloney**, **Caroline Kennedy** and State Attorney General **Andrew Cuomo**. But why should any of them get a seat solely at the whim of Paterson, or any other governor?

With Blagojevich's arrest, a fundamental flaw in the appointment process is glaringly evident. Of course, Blagojevich should not be allowed to appoint President-elect **Barack Obama**'s successor in the Senate unless and until he is cleared of the charges against him. As Illinois Senator **Dick Durbin** says, "No appointment by this governor, under these circumstances, could produce a credible replacement."

But Illinoisans should have a junior senator. What to do? Durbin proposes that his home state hold a special election to fill Obama's seat. Outgoing Illinois Senate president **Emil Jones** has responded with a plan to ask the State Senate and House to enact legislation that will clear the way for replacement of the junior senator by popular vote. Let's hope they pull it off. A special election would clean up some of the mess in Illinois. It would, as well, provide an example to other states of a more honest and democratic way to fill Senate vacancies. JOHN NICHOLS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pensation that workers are owed," but adding that ideally they "seek the resumption of operations at the plant."

Unreasonable demands? Not according to the president-elect, who says "the workers who are asking for their benefits and payments they have earned, I think they are absolutely right." Observes Obama, "What's happening to them is reflective of what's happening across this economy." That's not a to-the-barricades broadside. Like Roosevelt, Obama is merely offering workers some space in which to organize. What's significant is that UE, an independent union with roots in the militant labor organizing of the 1930s, is seizing the space. And unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win coalition are supporting a small struggle with a big message. "If this bailout should go to anything, it should go to the workers of this country," argued Richard Berg, president of Chicago's powerful Teamsters Local 743, as he rallied with the Republic workers.

Illinois officials and Chicago City Council members are on board as well, moving to bar state and local agencies from doing business with Bank of America. Chicago Representatives Jan Schakowsky and Luis Gutierrez are pressuring the Treasury to require banks that accept taxpayer financing to use the money to benefit America's workers. That move is especially significant, as Republic's circumstance is anything but unique.

Nor should UE's response be unique. Obama's presidency will not produce a new New Deal unless labor grabs the opening of a rare moment to fight to keep workers on the job and manufacturing functional as the economy stumbles. If that happens, it will be easier for Obama's administration to renew not just Wall Street but Main Street. If the right history of this time is written, it will be said that the new New Deal began in Chicago—not just because Obama comes from the city but because workers there chose to stand up by sitting down. JOHN NICHOLS

Stop Senator No

If the Democratic Party intends to get serious about governing, it can start by disabling the Republican filibuster that gives the minority party in the Senate a virtual veto over anything it wants to kill. The chatter in Washington assumes that since Democrats failed to gain a sixty-seat majority, there's nothing they can do. But that's not true. Democrats can change the rules and remove a malignant obstacle from the path of our new president. Given the emergency conditions facing the nation, why should Mitch McConnell and his right-wing colleagues get to decide what the Senate may vote on?

COMMENT

This proposition disturbs the happy talk about the "postpartisan" politics Barack Obama has inspired. But let's get real. McConnell is making nice for the moment, having survived his re-election scare in Kentucky. But he will use the filibuster to stymie the new Democratic administration whenever it looks to him like a political opportunity for Republicans. Thanks mainly to McConnell, the 110th Congress of 2007–08 set a new record—138 cloture motions to limit debate and head off filibusters. That is double the level of ten years ago. Who really believes McConnell will voluntarily give up his starring role as Senator No?

Last year, Democrats had a fifty-one-vote majority, but majority leader Harry Reid lamented their inability to overcome the minority. "The problem we have is that we don't have many moderate Republicans," Reid explained. In the new Congress there will be even fewer. Elections and retirements have left the surviving GOP caucus even more extreme in its ideology. The threat of a filibuster is its lever of power.

Democrats, on the other hand, have lost their last excuse for inaction. For years, they have blamed Bush's veto or the narrowly divided Senate for their weakness. Both are kaput. Now the Dems have the ability to step up and change the situation. But will they have the courage? Many of them like to hide behind Senate tradition, claiming it would be inappropriate to alter the rules. Nonsense. If Democrats allow the sixty-vote filibuster to survive, it is because they want to keep it as a convenient way to avoid taking responsibility.

The last time the Senate changed the cloture vote threshold to overcome a filibuster was in 1975, when the Democrats reduced it from sixty-seven to sixty votes. This time, the level can reasonably be reduced to fifty-five votes to break the GOP's stranglehold on major legislation. The argument for reform seems far more compelling now than it did in 1975. The filibuster ostensibly protects minority interests with the right to unlimited debate, but it has been used notoriously to accomplish the opposite. During the 1950s and '60s, Southern segregationists filibustered to block legislation intended to aid oppressed African-Americans—even a federal law against lynching. Liberals campaigned valiantly for years, without success, to reduce the sixty-seven-vote requirement.

In 1975 the filibuster issue was revived by post–Watergate Democrats frustrated in their efforts to enact popular reform legislation like campaign finance laws. Senator James Allen of Alabama, the most conservative Democrat in the Senate and a skillful parliamentary player, blocked them with a series of filibusters. Liberals were fed up with his delaying tactics. Senator Walter Mondale pushed a campaign to reduce the threshold from sixty-seven votes to a simple majority of fifty-one. In a parliamentary sleight of hand, the liberals broke Allen's filibuster by a majority vote, thus evading the sixty-seven-vote rule. (Senate rules say you can't change the rules without a cloture vote, but the Constitution says the Senate sets its own rules. As a practical matter, that means the majority can prevail whenever it decides

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

On the Auctioning Off of Barack Obama's Senate Seat

It seemed to Rod Blagojevich
A powerful appointment which
Was his to make should make him rich.
His plan turned out to have a glitch.
Perhaps the Feds had flipped a snitch.
So much for Rod Blagojevich.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to force the issue.) In 1975 the presiding officer during the debate, Vice President Rockefeller, first ruled with the liberals on a motion to declare Senator Allen out of order. When Allen appealed the "ruling of the chair" to the full Senate, the majority voted him down. Nervous Senate leaders, aware they were losing the precedent, offered a compromise. Henceforth, the cloture rule would require only sixty votes to stop a filibuster.

If the tactic sounds familiar, it's because Republicans proposed the same approach a couple of years ago when they concocted their "nuclear option" to halt Democratic filibusters against right-wing judicial nominees. To avoid the confrontation, both parties negotiated a truce. Some Republican judges were withdrawn; others were confirmed.

Something similar ought to unfold in the new Congress next year. At a minimum, the larger Democratic majority should rattle its saber quite visibly and demand explicit new terms from McConnell's minority. Given the country's adversities, it is intolerable to let the remnant right wing hold up Congress for the next two years. If McConnell will not accept a reasonable compromise, then Democrats should jam it down his throat.

This is not a trivial matter. Already, Washington gossip is suggesting Democrats may postpone or even abandon crucial labor-law reform already passed by the House, because Senate Dems lack the sixty votes to break a GOP filibuster. The Employee Free Choice Act would liberate workers everywhere from the oppressive and often illegal tactics corporations use to prevent them from organizing unions. This fundamental human right, guaranteed by law, is systematically violated by sleazy corporate tricks—illegal intimidation of workers, including firing, and endless legal stalling. If enacted, the law could spark a revival of union organizing, helping citizens mobilize for a new era of reform and reinvigorated democracy.

President-elect Obama may hesitate to involve himself directly in the Senate's filibuster fight, but the success of his presidency may depend on the outcome. If Republicans can defeat him on the labor issue, they will doubtless use their negative leverage to foil him on other important matters. Bipartisan cooperation is an honorable tradition and should be encouraged. But first, the obstructionist Republicans need to learn who must cooperate with whom.

WILLIAM GREIDER

Beware School 'Reformers'

If we taught babies to talk as most skills are taught in school, they would memorize lists of sounds in a predetermined order and practice them alone in a closet.

—Linda Darling-Hammond

Progressives are in short supply on the president-elect's list of cabinet nominees. When he turns his attention to the Education Department, what are the chances he'll choose someone who is educationally progressive?

In fact, just such a person is said to be in the running and, perhaps for that very reason, has been singled out for scorn in *Washington Post* and *Chicago Tribune* editorials, a *New York Times* column by David Brooks and a *New Republic* article, all published almost simultaneously this month. The thrust of the articles, using eerily similar language, is that we must reject the "forces of the status quo" which are "allied with the teachers' unions" and choose someone who represents "serious education reform."

To decode how that last word is being used here, recall its meaning in the context of welfare (under Clinton) or environmental laws (under Reagan and Bush). For Republicans education "reform" typically includes support for vouchers and other forms of privatization. But groups with names like Democrats for Education Reform—along with many mainstream publications—are disconcertingly allied with conservatives in just about every other respect. To be a school "reformer" is to support:

COMMENT

§ a heavy reliance on fill-in-the-bubble standardized tests to evaluate students and schools, generally in place of more authentic forms of assessment;

§ the imposition of prescriptive, top-down teaching standards and curriculum mandates;

§ a disproportionate emphasis on rote learning—memorizing facts and practicing skills—particularly for poor kids;

§ a behaviorist model of motivation in which rewards (notably money) and punishments are used on teachers and students to compel compliance or raise test scores;

§ a corporate sensibility and an economic rationale for schooling, the point being to prepare children to "compete" as future employees; and

§ charter schools, many run by for-profit companies.

Notice that these features are already pervasive, which means "reform" actually signals more of the same—or, perhaps, intensification of the status quo with variations like one-size-fits-all *national* curriculum standards or longer school days (or years). Almost never questioned, meanwhile, are the core elements of traditional schooling, such as lectures, worksheets, quizzes, grades, homework, punitive discipline and competition. That would require real reform, which of course is off the table.

Sadly, all but one of the people reportedly being considered for Education secretary are reformers only in this Orwellian sense of the word. The exception is Linda Darling-Hammond, a former teacher, expert on teacher quality and professor of education at Stanford. The favored contenders include assorted governors and two corporate-style school chiefs: Arne Duncan, whose all-too-apt title is "chief executive officer" of Chicago Public Schools, and his counterpart in New York City, former CEO and high-powered lawyer Joel Klein.

Duncan, a basketball buddy of Obama's, has been called a "budding hero in the education business" by Bush's former Education secretary, Rod Paige. Just as the test-crazy nightmare of Paige's Houston served as a national model (when it should have been a cautionary tale) in 2001, so Duncan would bring to Washington an agenda based on Renaissance 2010, which Chicago education activist Michael Klonsky describes as a blend of "more standardized testing, closing neighborhood schools, militarization, and the privatization of school management."

Duncan's philosophy is shared by Klein, who is despised by educators and parents in his district perhaps more than any superintendent in the nation [see Lynnell Hancock, "School's Out," July 9, 2007]. In a survey of 62,000 New York City teachers this past summer, roughly 80 percent disapproved of his approach. Indeed, talk of his candidacy has prompted three separate anti-Klein petitions that rapidly collected thousands of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

signatures. One, at StopJoelKlein.org, describes his administration as "a public relations exercise camouflaging the systematic elimination of parental involvement; an obsessively test-driven culture; a growing atmosphere of fear, disillusionment, and intimidation experienced by professionals; and a flagrant manipulation of school data." (The only petition I know of to *promote* an Education secretary candidate is one for Darling-Hammond, at www.petitiononline.com/DHammond/petition.html.)

Duncan and Klein pride themselves on new programs that pay students for higher grades or scores. Both champion the practice of forcing low-scoring students to repeat a grade—a strategy that research overwhelmingly finds counterproductive. Coincidentally, Darling-Hammond wrote in 2001 about just such campaigns against "social promotion" in New York and Chicago, pointing out that politicians keep trotting out the same failed get-tough strategies "with no sense of irony or institutional memory." In that same essay, she also showed how earlier experiments with high-stakes testing have mostly served to increase the dropout rate.

Duncan and Klein, along with virulently antiprogressive DC schools chancellor Michelle Rhee, are celebrated by politicians and pundits. Darling-Hammond, meanwhile, tends to be the choice of people who understand how children learn. Consider her wry comment that introduces this article: it's impossible to imagine a comparable insight coming from any of the spreadsheet-oriented, pump-up-the-scores "reformers" (or, for that matter, from any previous Education secretary). Darling-Hammond knows how all the talk of "rigor" and "raising the bar" has produced sterile, scripted curriculums that have been imposed disproportionately on children of color. Her viewpoint is that of an educator, not a corporate manager.

Imagine—an educator running the Education Department.

ALFIE KOHN

Alfie Kohn (www.alfiekohn.org) is the author of eleven books, including The Schools Our Children Deserve, The Case Against Standardized Testing *and* What Does It Mean to Be Well Educated?

Editorial Malpractice

COMMENT

Over the past few years, the *Washington Post*'s editorial page has pushed an increasingly hostile line toward Russia, painting complex developments there in Manichaean terms and accusing the Kremlin—and usually Vladimir Putin—of responsibility for just about anything that goes wrong, real or imagined, in that part of the world. During the recent war between Russia and Georgia, *Post* editorials placed the blame squarely on alleged Russian neoimperialism, going so far as to deny that the Georgians had inflicted serious destruction on the South Ossetian capital, despite reports from human rights organizations, the OSCE and even the *Post*'s own journalists. This hardline, deeply flawed position by one of the nation's most influential editorial pages has played a leading role in driving America and Russia to the brink of a new cold war.

A hyperbolic October 22 lead editorial, "More Poison: Another prominent adversary of Vladimir Putin is mysteriously exposed to toxins," led me to ask the *Post*'s editorial page editor and onetime Moscow bureau co-chief, Fred Hiatt, about his sources for the paper's charges. Hiatt's painstaking response unintentionally offered a rare glimpse into how, when it comes to Russia and Putin, the editorial page's incessant demonization puts more weight on ideology than on journalistic professionalism—or simple fact-checking.

The editorial essentially accused Prime Minister Putin of poisoning a human rights lawyer in Strasbourg, France, by ordering the planting of mercury in her car. The lawyer, Karina Moskalenko, has taken on the Kremlin in the European Court of Human Rights on numerous occasions, so when she fell ill and her husband found traces of mercury in their car, French investigators were brought in to conduct an inquiry into a possible crime. But without waiting for the investigators' report, Hiatt's editorial page rushed out its verdict, intoning portentously, "It's chilling to consider that there would be another poisoning of another Putin enemy in another Western European city."

Le Figaro, which had broken the story of the suspected poisoning a few days earlier, reported that French investigators had announced that the lawyer in all likelihood hadn't been poisoned; the mercury came from a broken barometer from the car's previous owner. The *Post* didn't retract or apologize. The editorial page made no mention of the revelation, and the news editors banished the update to a tiny blurb buried on page A14.

In his e-mail response to my criticism of the editorial, Hiatt ignored my question asking why the *Post* hadn't waited for the investigation results before publishing its own verdict. Instead, he made a new set of accusations. "I am aware of newspaper articles in *Figaro* and the *New York Times* that quoted unnamed police sources positing the theory that a broken thermometer was the source of the mercury found in Moskalenko's car," he said. "These sources were in Paris, where officials may have a foreign-policy reason not to spark a dispute with Russia, and not in Strasbourg, where the investigation was taking place." He also implied that Moskalenko, who doubted the "broken-thermometer theory," as Hiatt put it, was more reliable than the investigators. These were incredible charges leveled at *Le Figaro* and the French political and judicial systems. But was Hiatt right?

I decided to check his version of events by calling Cyrille Louis, the *Figaro* reporter. Louis had broken both stories: the alleged Moskalenko poisoning and the investigators' findings debunking those allegations. Unlike the *Post*, *The Nation* doesn't have a Paris bureau. And yet it took just two phone calls to reach Louis and ask him how he reported the story. "I am frankly surprised that the *Washington Post*'s editorial page editor would say something like this without even calling me to see if what he says was true," Louis told me, stunned and laughing. "It's simply not true. I used several sources, but the two main sources were a top police official here in Paris and a top investigator from the prosecutor's office in Strasbourg." Louis even named the source in Strasbourg—assistant prosecutor Claude Palpacuer. His sources in Paris are reliable people he has been working with for years. Louis explained that the investigators felt they'd probably solved the case after they tracked down the car's previous owner, a local antiques dealer who had indeed broken an old barometer (not thermometer) in the car shortly before selling it.

I then asked Louis what he thought about Hiatt's larger assumption: that *Le Figaro*'s sources in Paris could not be trusted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because the French might be worried about upsetting Russia. Again, Louis laughed in disbelief: "This sounds like a kind of conspiracy theory. You would have to believe that judges and police officials in two cities conspired to manipulate a *Le Figaro* journalist in order to plant a story that was not very big news here in the first place. Why would the authorities go through all of this effort for such a small story? I find this idea of a conspiracy completely unlikely." Louis was disappointed at Hiatt's accusations: "I suppose I might feel honored that the *Washington Post* bothers to write about me, but you know, I feel a bit surprised. If he called me I could have explained how I wrote the story. But he didn't try. Quite often we're very impressed here by how American journalists work, the high standards they use to source stories.… So it's disappointing to learn that [Hiatt] came to his conclusions about the way I work without even calling me."

Louis gave me the contact information for assistant prosecutor Palpacuer, who is overseeing the investigation. I tapped an old writer/translator friend in Paris, Thierry Marignac, to interpret for me. Palpacuer confirmed everything Louis told me, although the case had moved a bit further since then: "The amounts of mercury were so tiny that they were not toxic. We took blood samples from Moskalenko's family, and the results show that the mercury amounts in their blood were insignificant. In any case, mercury would have to be inhaled or injected in order to be lethal," Palpacuer said. "The investigation is not closed yet and has been given to the criminal division of the Strasbourg police department. But we know the former owner of the vehicle broke a barometer in it before selling the car, and those amounts correspond to the amounts we found."

In response to Hiatt's theory that the investigation was unreliable and probably influenced by Paris officials who didn't want to upset Russia, Palpacuer burst out laughing: "This is beyond me, I am sorry. I work with the evidence I have before me in the investigation. But really—the Russians? Influencing this case? I don't know what to say, it's ridiculous. I would just say that we welcome any new evidence if anyone has it. If there is evidence of Russians influencing this investigation, I would welcome it."

Evidence. Facts. These were not the sorts of things Hiatt's response to me were concerned with. However, Hiatt did ask me to send along any new information about the Moskalenko case. Well, here it is—information that came with the magic of a couple of phone calls.

This leaves us where we started. Will the *Post* retract this piece of poorly sourced, unprofessional editorializing? Will the editorial page be held accountable by its ombudsman and others at the *Post*? After all, the ombudsman managed to attack the paper's alleged "liberal bias" recently—a highly debatable position. But in this case, we have a clear example of a failure to get the facts right, and a further failure to retract those errors.

Given the *Post*'s broader record over the past decade, from the war in Iraq to the conflict in South Ossetia, and Hiatt's response to this case, it's worth asking if the editorial page has mishandled other crucial decisions, especially those relating to Russia, as badly as it has bungled the Moskalenko story. It's a question that needs answering.

MARK AMES

Mark Ames, author of The eXile: Sex, Drugs and Libel in the New Russia *(Grove), is a regular contributor to eXiled Online. Thierry Marignac contributed to this editorial from Paris.*

Hard Times Without Studs

COMMENT

On December 7 I went to a memorial for Studs Terkel, that human dynamo, our nation's greatest listener and talker, the one person I just couldn't imagine dying. After all, the man wrote his classic oral history of death, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* at 89, and only then did he do his oral history of hope, *Hope Dies Last*. The celebration of his life went on for almost two and a half hours. Everyone on stage had a classic story about the guy, one better than the next, and Studs would have been thrilled that so many people talked at such length about him. But he wouldn't have stayed. Half an hour into the event, he would have been out the door, across the street and into the nearest bar, asking people about their lives. And the amazing thing is this: they would have been spilling their guts. He could make a stone talk—and not only that, but tell a story of stone-ness that no one had ever heard before or even imagined a stone might tell. His death is like the closing of an archive of what was best in America; his legacy lies in oral histories that will inform the generations.

Unfortunately, his remarkable oral history of the Great Depression, *Hard Times*, may prove all too hauntingly relevant to our moment. In fact, in the midst of the ceremonies, radio host Laura Flanders pointed out that, in Studs's beloved Chicago, a group of more than 200 workers were sitting in at their factory [see John Nichols, page 4]. If this isn't a message from and about a changing nation, I don't know what is. And, by the way, the fact that the president-elect supported the workers' demands at a recent news conference indicates not just that change has indeed occurred but that messages sent from the bottom en masse don't go unnoticed by canny politicians at the top.

Until this second, who would have predicted such a thing? And who can imagine what version of hard times we will face? All I know is that if Studs, who made it to 96, were alive today, he would have recognized a moment of hope when he saw it and made a beeline for that factory, tape recorder in hand. He was, after all, a man who knew that anyone can hope in good times but that in bad times, to feel hopeful you have to act, you have to take a step, even on an unknown path. And he was a man who also would have known that the lives of those workers were at least as complex, deep, dark, surprising, fascinating, confusing and remarkable as any among Washington's elite or the movers and shakers (down) of Wall Street.

In one of Studs's interviews, the chief of the trauma unit at a Chicago hospital, talking about how a doctor should deal with the family of a young person who has just died traumatically, says, "Sit down with them. Look into their eyes. If you can, hold on to them and say, 'It's bad news.' And they'll say, 'Is he dead?' Or they just look at you. You have to use the word, you have to say it: 'He's dead.' If you say he's 'expired,' he's 'passed away,' they don't hear that.… It's very important to put yourself into their shoes, but you've got to say the word 'dead.' You've got to give them the finality of it."

Well, Studs is dead. And it's hard times without him.

TOM ENGELHARDT

Tom Engelhardt runs The Nation Institute's TomDispatch.com. Once upon a time, he edited two of Studs Terkel's books.

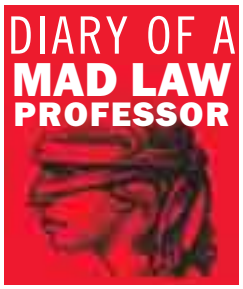
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Patricia J. Williams

American Dreams

On December 8 the front page of the *New York Times* featured an arresting image of three snow-white SUVs on the altar of a Pentecostal church in Detroit. Like bullocks led to sacrifice, they were parked amid a swirl of parishioners in choir robes, arms raised in song and seeming supplication. The caption revealed that they were praying for the auto industry to be saved.

It might be tempting for some to dismiss such pageantry as idolatry, this beseeched-for sustenance embodied in a once–golden calf, now a dried-up cash cow. But as passion play, it is powerfully evocative of an American spirit. If I were the proverbial Martian anthropologist, I'd see similarities between those SUV anthems and a rain dance, or the miracle of the loaves and fishes. We pray for the cod to be plentiful, we pray for the corn crop, we pray for a harvest of cars. We look for divine signs that our traditional sources of abundance have not been driven to the point of drought or extinction.



The American Dream is a form of worship—if more than just metaphorically so—in certain branches of evangelical and charismatic Protestantism. From Daddy Grace to Pat Robertson, from tents to televangelism, a strong line of American sectarianism converts monetary remuneration into a form of God's grace. Even for those of us to whom this configuration is not a matter of divine will but rather the outcome of applied economic ideologies and sociopolitical narratives, its immense symbolism is worthy of serious consideration. If this recession/depression is not the work of a deity hungry for sacrifice, it might be good to take a look at the stories we tell ourselves, the ones that bind, and blind, us to the stupidity, arrogance and corruption of those who rule from the heavenly pinnacle of top-down corporate, as well as Congressional, governance.

All our civic saints are ciphers for hard work and its just rewards: Horatio Alger, the self-made tycoon. Old MacDonald, the farmer in gumboots and plaid shirt. Joe Sixpack, the factory worker with his hard hat and lunch pail. My Ántonia, the busy housewife turned plain-spoken soccer mom. We recite parables in which their evil nemeses, the sloth and the sluggardly grasshopper, starve in the winter, and deservedly so; for there is fruit on the trees for all who reach for it and lay in a store of provisions. We invent the Evil Welfare Queen and try to do away with public assistance so that she will learn to help herself. We invent the Greedy Trial Lawyer as a reason to "reform" bankruptcy so that loan forgiveness is nearly impossible for consumers to get. We invent the Fat Cat Union Member, who schemes to break the back of his honest employer by burdening business with silly perks like pensions, minimum wage and healthcare.

An economic ice age is upon us, however. As with any belief system, the loss of an idyll results in fear, anger, anxiety. When Samuel Wurzelbacher, *dba* Joe the Plumber, availed himself of the opportunity to ask candidate Barack Obama about taxes, he premised his question on a scenario that had nothing to do with his actual life circumstances. He was supposedly a plumber—although he was not licensed in any state as such. He was supposedly going to buy a business worth $250,000—although he had liens against him for back taxes and medical bills and earned $40,000. Joe the Plumber, an aspirational but entirely fictive reverie, was so powerful an American persona that vast swaths of the public, as well as Wurzelbacher himself, were able to disidentify with the actual living, breathing, struggling man. "Joe" is a hard-working man of means; Sam is a hard-working person who is barely making it. The inability to reconcile the vision and the reality creates a split, a chasm in which dissatisfaction festers, leaks, then seeks a target, longs for a scapegoat.

There is no comfortable role in American iconography for the poor. The myth of inevitable mobility leaves little room for acknowledging the existence of the dispossessed. Poverty is shrugged off like foreignness when you step off the boat and sashay down the golden bricks of Main Street. We Americans believe in pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps, but in case you've never tried it, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps pitches you forward, flat onto your face. As our industrial base moves offshore and our fruited plains are taken over by agribusiness, the trope of the blissful drone inspired by promises of phantasmagorical wealth is revealed as unsustainable. The creed by which we profess ourselves a classless society no longer leads to redemption.

Americans are the hardest workers among industrialized nations. We grind ourselves down with the longest workweek and the fewest social protections. No pint in the pub, no rest for the weary. The very idea of being "weary" has been displaced by images of the relentlessly able-bodied bionic economic man who never stops until the body is genuinely and visibly broken. Disability checks come only when you have the marks to prove it—a bit like the way the Bush administration defines torture.

And so I think it's time we consciously craft new prayer totems. If I were to bring an offering to the altar of the American Dream, I'd haul in an electric tram, two intercity railroad cars and a bouquet of bicycles. I'd garnish them with copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I'd hand out praise songs for the concept of human dignity and for economic rights. We ought to recognize the basic need for sustenance as a right, not bury the larger question in the vexed vocabulary of "bailouts" and "handouts." We the people have a right to a home, to healthcare, to untainted food, clean water, a living wage and time to rest, time to develop the personal ties and social engagements that sustain the best and most pleasurable parts of a civilization.

If we could retrofit auto factories to make tanks during World War II, how hard can it be to recognize that oil dependency is killing us—literally, in wars but also with climate erosion? How hard can it be to fire the petroleum-drunk heads of the Big Three and to get those desperately hopeful parishioners back to an honest, and honorable, day's work? ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eric Alterman

'Center-Right'? Not Quite…

As the Bush era reaches its sordid finale, pundits and politicians are attempting to float any number of specious notions in order to try to put lipstick on this metaphorical pig of a presidency, as well as to constrict President-elect Obama's room for maneuver. The most transparent of these was the laughable claim by *New York Times* pundit William Kristol that "We've won the [Iraq] war." As Matt Duss of the Center for American Progress's Wonk Room has sagely noted, Kristol's statement makes sense only if one redefines "win" to mean "completely failed to produce any of the positive effects I previously insisted would be forthcoming, but avoided the very worst imaginable outcome." The war, as Peter Galbraith demonstrates in his recent book *Unintended Consequences*, has increased the terrorist threat to the United States; strengthened our enemy, Iran, further endangering Israel; weakened friendly Arab regimes like Jordan; reduced American prestige everywhere; and failed in its fundamental aim to create a functioning democratic state in Iraq. It has done so, moreover, at a cost, according to the extremely conservative calculations of a recent Brookings Institution report, of roughly 100,000 dead Iraqi civilians, 5 million displaced Iraqi refugees, 4,000 dead American soldiers, more than 30,000 wounded soldiers and more than $500 billion (though Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz more credibly puts the cost at $3 trillion).

The absurdity of Kristol's campaign is self-evident. A more complicated dynamic, however, is at work in the insistent claim we hear from almost everywhere in the MSM that President Obama had better be careful about veering too far leftward because, after all, we live in a "center-right nation."

The most eloquent and influential of these salvos came in the form of a pre-election cover story by *Newsweek*'s editor, Jon Meacham, the author of a number of bestselling and well-respected biographical studies. Unfortunately, in this case, Meacham concocted a historical house of cards.

Meacham puts great stock in the fact that barely one in five Americans embraces the label "liberal" to describe themselves. But this is easily explained by the mountains of opprobrium that conservatives—working hand in glove with a cowed MSM—have heaped on "liberals" during the past three decades and the negative associations that have resulted. If you examine the actual policy positions of those Americans who eschew the liberal label, you'll see that the vast majority of Americans, whatever they may call themselves, embrace the "liberal" position on virtually every significant issue. (Replace the word "liberal" with "progressive," and you will nearly double the number of respondents who claim it.) And these numbers are growing as more and more young people demonstrate even greater liberal tendencies than their parents and grandparents in opinion surveys across the board.

Meacham points to a pattern of Democratic presidents tripped up by their liberal leanings, but his assessment of the putative causes of these failures is highly debatable, to say the least. While it is true that FDR's party lost significant ground in the 1938 and 1942 midterm elections, these were short setbacks on the way to winning five straight presidential elections and nine of ten Congressional contests. (If this is Meacham's idea of "overreach," well, I think Obama would be willing to sign on the dotted line.) Moreover, FDR suffered politically from his misbegotten desire to return to a balanced budget. And he was never so successful, and never so unapologetically liberal, as in his 1936 re-election effort, when he spoke for the party of "militant liberalism"—one he later described as believing "in the duty of Government" to solve society's problems, in opposition to those who placed faith in "individual initiative and private philanthropy" to "take care of all situations."

Sure, as Meacham points out, "LBJ had only two years of great success before Vietnam." But it's rather a stretch to argue, following George W. Bush's Vietnam-like Iraq misadventure, that Obama is likely to reprise either man's catastrophic combination of arrogance and incompetence. (Besides, Vietnam was as much a conservative cause as a liberal one in Johnson's early years.)

Similarly, Carter and Clinton had their early missteps, but to blame these on liberal overreach is to misread (and oversimplify) the complex causes and effects of historical contingency. Did the oil embargo, stagflation and exploding interest rates have something to do with Carter's failure? And was Clinton's anti-NRA crime bill—the proximate cause of the 1994 midterm election debacle—really so "liberal"? Massive majorities of Americans supported exactly those elements to which the gun fanatics objected: the outlawing of cop-killing bullets and semiautomatic machine guns.

Later on in his essay, Meacham switches the topic to argue that America is less liberal than most of Europe. This is undeniably true when comparing the electoral results of our political systems. But save for the fact of Americans' far deeper attachment to their churches and mistrust of their government, many of the differences can be attributed to significant dysfunction in the practice of American democracy. Western Europe is filled with governments that do a far better job than ours when it comes to services and social and environmental security broadly defined. But these same countries also enjoy more responsive political systems that are at least partially based on proportional representation, ideologically coherent political parties and far less legal corruption resulting from private funding of public office.

John McCain's alter ego, Mark Salter, predicted, "Over 60 percent of Americans considered Barack Obama to be a 'liberal.' Typically, a candidate is not going to win the presidency with those figures."

I guess these labels aren't what they used to be. ■

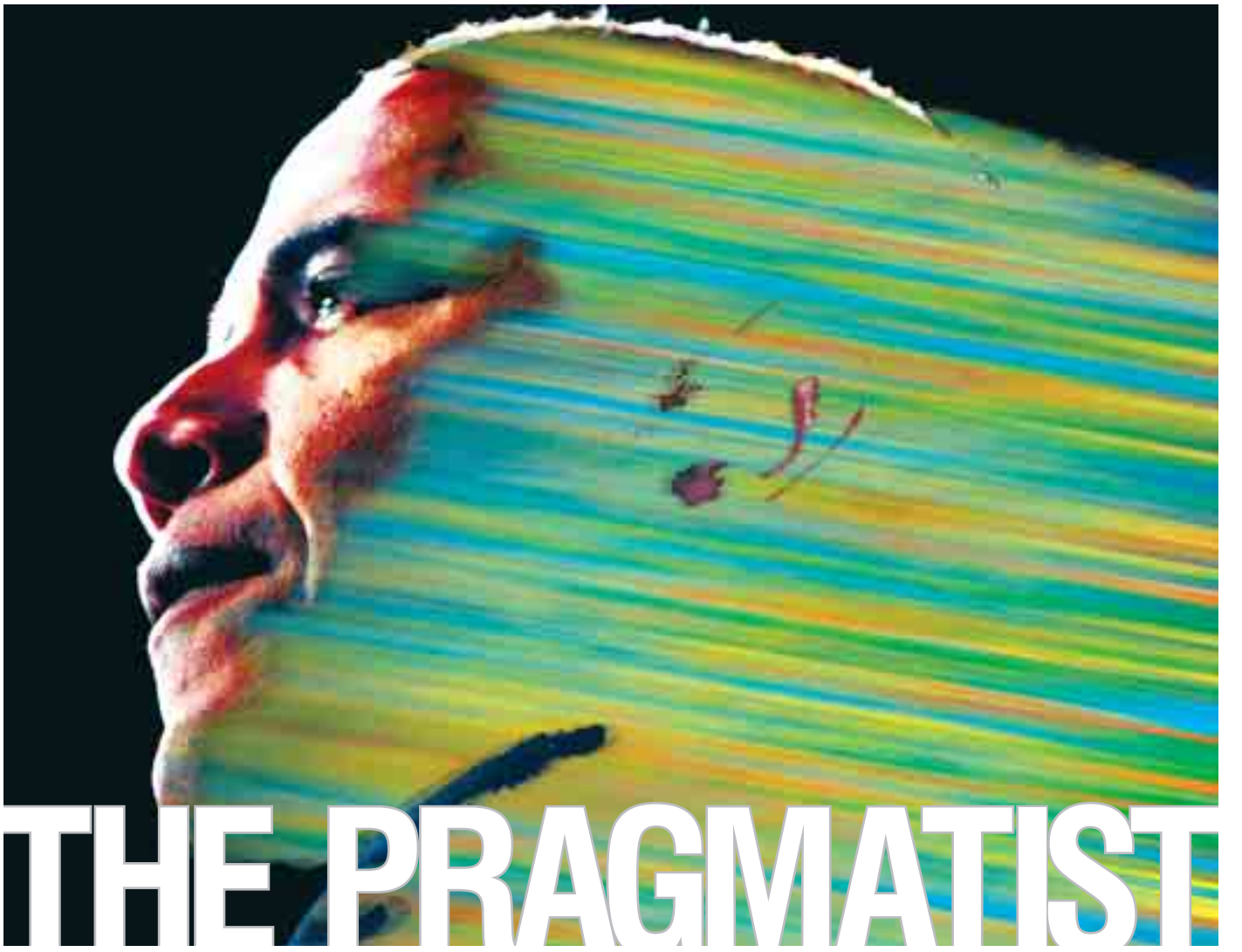
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!
(No, not them. The gift card!)

Give The Nation this holiday season.

Just $39.97

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE PRAGMATIST

It's a label Obama has embraced, but what does it mean?

by CHRISTOPHER HAYES

In case you haven't heard, Barack Obama is a pragmatist. Everybody agrees on this. Joe Biden, accepting Obama's nod as VP at his unveiling event in Springfield, Illinois, called him a "clear-eyed pragmatist." Describing Obama's rise through Chicago politics, the *New York Times* stressed his "pragmatic politics," while the *Washington Post*'s David Ignatius refers to "The Pragmatic Obama," and one of Obama's most trusted confidantes, Valerie Jarrett, told *USA Today*, soon after his election-day victory, "I'm not sure people understand how pragmatic he is. He's a pragmatist. He really wants to get things done."

Obama is clear on this point as well, touting his national security team as "shar[ing] my pragmatism about the use of power" and telling Steve Kroft during his recent *60 Minutes* interview that when it comes to economic policy, he doesn't want to "get bottled up in a lot of ideology and 'Is this conservative or liberal?' My interest is finding something that works."

Fair enough. We get it. He's a pragmatist. But just what does that mean? It can't simply be that he's comfortable with compromise, willing to maneuver in the world as it is. That goes without saying. The man was just elected president of the United States. Head-in-the-clouds idealists do not, as a rule, come to control the American nuclear arsenal.

So we are left to interpret. In the weeks since his election, people in the press and in politics, the Beltway and the netroots have been sifting through the scraps of leaked information, and awkwardly reading these entrails for signs of the administration's future direction, to come to understand just what this pragmatism will look like. Several factors make the project difficult. The onrush of events, with the tidal waves of economic distress, make it nearly impossible to predict policies. Who would have imagined the Bush administration overseeing a state takeover of the nation's largest insurance conglomerate? If things keep going in the direction they're headed, the most "pragmatic" policy options—for instance, a wholesale national-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ization of the financial sector—may very well make the most fevered fantasies of radicals seem quaint.

On top of this, there's Obama's famous rhetorical dexterity, which he's marshaled to tremendous effect—giving progressives as well as centrists reasons to believe he shares their values and outlook. In a postelection essay on Obama, George Packer noted these two strains of his campaign rhetoric and dubbed them the "'progressive' Obama" and "the 'post-partisan' Obama."

In Washington "pragmatic" is a kind of code word for the latter, and it's that Obama the Beltway establishment is happily embracing. On the front page of the *Times*, in a "news analysis" (a recurring feature that might as well be titled "Conventional Wisdom Digest"), David Sanger pointed to the likely appointments of Hillary Clinton and Timothy Geithner as suggesting that "Mr. Obama is planning to govern from the center-right of his party, surrounding himself with pragmatists"—that word again!—"rather than ideologues." David Brooks could hardly contain himself: "the team he has announced so far is more impressive than any other in recent memory," he gushed, praising it as made of "open-minded individuals who are persuadable by evidence" and "admired professionals" who are not "excessively partisan" and, probably most important, "not ideological."

Obama's famous rhetorical dexterity has given progressives as well as centrists reasons to believe he shares their values and outlook.

This isn't the first time we've been treated to a round of fawning over Obama's post-ideological pose. Last spring, after sewing up the Democratic nomination, Obama seemed, through a mix of statements and votes, to take a sharp turn toward the center. He praised the Supreme Court's decision to strike down DC's handgun ban, criticized the Court's decision throwing out the death penalty for rapists and, most notably, voted for a FISA bill that included telecom immunity after saying he wouldn't. This earned him the ire of many progressives. Obama adviser Cass Sunstein took to the pages of *The New Republic* to defend his onetime University of Chicago law school colleague from charges of flip-flopping. "Obama has not betrayed anyone," he wrote. "The real problem lies in the assumption, still widespread on both the left and the right, that Obama is a doctrinaire liberal whose positions can be deduced simply by asking what the left thinks."

For Sunstein, the fact that Obama's views "have never been simple to characterize," that he is a "minimalist" who "prefers solutions that can be accepted by people with a wide variety of theoretical inclinations," is his defining trait and chief virtue. This, Sunstein contends, is particularly salient in the wake of the Bush years. "Many people on the left want Obama to be the anti-Bush," he wrote. "But what, exactly, does this mean? To some, it means a kind of left-wing Bushism—the mirror image of the Bush administration, with its rigidity, its insistence on enduring political divisions, and its ruthlessly Manichean approach to political life.... But in his empiricism, his curiosity, his insistence on nuance, and his lack of dogmatism, Obama is indeed a sort of anti-Bush—and perhaps the best kind."

The chief failure of Bushism, according to Sunstein, is not its content but its form. Not the substance of ideology but the fact that he was too wedded to it, too rigid and dogmatic. It's a view widely held in Washington. Many, like Sunstein, have drawn a lesson from the past eight years that is not about the failure of conservatism—neo or otherwise—or the dangers of the particularly toxic ideological disposition of the Bush administration, of larding public dollars on your cronies and friends, of exacerbating inequality while gutting regulatory oversight, of eviscerating centuries-old common law protections or of starting pre-emptive wars.

No, through a kind of collective category error, they have alighted on a far more general moral to the story: ideology, in any form, is dangerous. "Obama's victory does not signal a shift in ideology in this country," wrote Roger Simon in *Politico*. "It signals that the American public has grown weary of ideologies." No less an ideologue than Pat Buchanan has come to this same understanding: "If there is a one root cause to the Bush failures," he wrote, "it has been his fatal embrace of ideology."

If "pragmatic" is the highest praise one can offer in DC these days, "ideological" is perhaps the sharpest slur. And it is by this twisted logic that the crimes of the Bush cabinet are laid at the feet of the blogosphere, that the sins of Paul Wolfowitz end up draped upon the slender shoulders of Dennis Kucinich.

But privileging pragmatism over ideology, while perhaps understandable in the wake of the Bush years, misses the point. For one thing, as Glenn Greenwald has astutely pointed out on his blog, while ideology can lead decision-makers to ignore facts, it is also what sets the limiting conditions for any pragmatic calculation of interests. "Presumably, there are instances where a proposed war might be very pragmatically beneficial in promoting our national self-interest," Greenwald wrote, "but is still something that we ought not to do. Why? Because as a matter of principle—of ideology—we believe that it is not just to do it, no matter how many benefits we might reap, no matter how much it might advance our 'national self-interest.'"

Indeed, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, "pragmatists" of all stripes—Alan Dershowitz, Richard Posner—lined up to offer tips and strategies on how best to implement a practical and effective torture regime; but ideologues said no torture, no exceptions. Same goes for the Iraq War, which many "pragmatic" lawmakers—Hillary Clinton, Arlen Specter—voted for and which ideologues across the political spectrum, from Ron Paul to Bernie Sanders, opposed. Of course, by any reckoning, the war didn't work. That is, it failed to be a practical, nonideological improvement to the nation's security. This, despite the fact that so many willed themselves to believe that the benefits would clearly outweigh the costs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Principle is often pragmatism's guardian. Particularly at times of crisis, when a polity succumbs to collective madness or delusion, it is only the obstinate ideologues who refuse to go along. Expediency may be a virtue in virtuous times, but it's a vice in vicious ones.

There's another problem with the fetishization of the pragmatic, which is the brute fact that, at some level, ideology is inescapable. Obama may have told Steve Kroft that he's solely interested in "what works," but what constitutes "working" is not self-evident and, indeed, is impossible to detach from some worldview and set of principles. Alan Greenspan, of all people, made this point deftly while testifying before Henry Waxman's House Oversight Committee. Waxman asked Greenspan, "Do you feel that your ideology pushed you to make decisions that you wish you had not made?" To which Greenspan responded, "Well, remember that what an ideology is, is a conceptual framework with the way people deal with reality. Everyone has one. You have to—to exist, you need an ideology. The question is whether it is accurate or not."

In Greenspan's case, it was not. But more destructive than his ideological rigidity was the delusional pretense shared by so many observers that he was operating without any ideology whatsoever. In a 1987 profile, which ran soon after Greenspan's appointment as Fed chair, the *Times* quoted a fellow economist who said Greenspan didn't fit into any set ideological category. "If he's anything," the colleague remarked, "he's a pragmatist, and as such, he is somewhat unpredictable." The rest of the article chronicled Greenspan's support for wholesale deregulation of the financial industry and philosophical devotion to Ayn Rand. It's tempting to conclude that Greenspan's ideology was allowed to wreak the havoc it did only because it was never actually called by its name.

Ironically, there are quite a few on the left who hope (and many on the right who fear) that Obama will be able to pull off a similar trick. Ideology is always most potent when least visible, when smuggled beneath the cloak of "pragmatism." And there is a certain line of thought that says that Obama's largely centrist, establishment-friendly cabinet and staff picks are a brilliant means of husbanding his political capital, co-opting the establishment and bringing the center toward him, inducing it to buy into the bold, progressive sea change in American governance he has planned.

Either way, there will be moments in the next four years when a principled fight will be required, and if there is an uneasiness rippling through the minds of some progressives, it arises from their doubts about just how willing Obama will be to fight those fights. When a friend of mine decided to run for office this year, someone suggested that he write down a list of positions he wouldn't take, votes he wouldn't cast, then put it in a safe and give someone the key. The idea was that by committing himself in writing to some basic skeletal list of principles, he'd be at least partially anchored against the slippery slope of compromise that so often leads elected officials to lose their way.

Does Obama have such a list? And if so, what's on it?

This is not to say that there isn't something appealing and meaningful about Obama's self-professed pragmatism. Pragmatism in common usage may mean simply a practical approach to problems and affairs. But it's also the name of the uniquely American school of philosophy whose doctrine is that truth is pre-eminently to be tested by the practical consequences of belief. What unites the two senses of the word is a shared skepticism toward certainties derived from abstractions—one that is welcome and bracing after eight years of a failed, faith-based presidency.

Both senses of the word also course through the life of Obama's hero, Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was, most historians agree, deeply pragmatic in the first sense. As the cable news networks have reminded us ad nauseam, Lincoln brought political foes and countering viewpoints into his cabinet, creating a "team of rivals" that many see as a blueprint for Obama. (When Kroft asked Obama if this was the case, he replied that Lincoln was "a very wise man.") Lincoln was also pragmatic about the institution he helped end: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it," he wrote to newspaper editor Horace Greeley in August 1862, "and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."

Obama says he's interested in 'what works,' but what that constitutes is not self-evident and, indeed, impossible to detach from a worldview.

This is a kind of pragmatism that to our modern ears comes close to colluding with evil, and it shows how even the most "pragmatic" decisions are embedded in a hierarchy of values: in this case the integrity of the nation over the human rights of millions of its residents. But as Louis Menand argued in his book *The Metaphysical Club*, the sentiment expressed in Lincoln's letter to Greeley was widely shared: "For many white Americans after 1865, the abolitionists were the century's villains.... They had driven a wedge into white America, and they did it because they had become infatuated with an idea. They marched the nation to the brink of self-destruction in the name of an abstraction."

There is a faint echo of this notion in Obama's professed pragmatism, and in his distaste for the culture war. The Civil War was the original culture war, one so bloody and horrible it makes a mockery of our use of martial metaphors to describe today's red-state, blue-state divisions. Obama seemed to draw a link between the two when during his election-night victory speech he reached out to his opponent's supporters by quoting Lincoln: "As Lincoln said to a nation far more divided than ours: 'We are not enemies, but friends.... Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.'"

Pragmatism as a school of thought was born of a similar impulse of reconciliation. Having witnessed, and in some cases experienced firsthand, the horror of violence and irreconcilable ideological conflict during the Civil War, William James, Charles Peirce and Oliver Wendell Holmes were moved to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reject the metaphysical certainty in eternal truths that had so motivated the abolitionists, emphasizing instead epistemic humility, contingency and the acquisition of knowledge through practice—trial and error.

This tradition is a worthy inheritance for any president, particularly in times as manifestly uncertain as these. And if there's a silver thread woven into the pragmatist mantle Obama claims, it has its origins in this school of thought. Obama could do worse than to look to John Dewey, another onetime resident of Hyde Park and the founder of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, which Obama's daughters attend. Dewey developed the work of earlier pragmatists in a particularly fruitful and apposite manner. For him, the crux of pragmatism, and indeed democracy, was a rejection of the knowability of foreordained truths in favor of "variability, initiative, innovation, departure from routine, experimentation."

Dewey's pragmatism was reformist, not radical. He sought to ameliorate the excesses of early industrial capitalism, not to topple it. Nonetheless, pragmatism requires an openness to the possibility of radical solutions. It demands a skepticism not just toward the certainties of ideologues and dogmatism but also of elite consensus and the status quo. This is a definition of pragmatism that is in almost every way the opposite of its invocation among those in the establishment. For them, pragmatism means accepting the institutional forces that severely limit innovation and boldness; it means listening to the counsel of the Wise Men; it means not rocking the boat.

But Dewey understood that progress demands that the boat be rocked. And his contemporary Franklin Delano Roosevelt understood it as well. "The country needs," Roosevelt said in May 1932, "and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands, bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something. The millions who are in want will not stand by silently forever while the things to satisfy their needs are within easy reach."

That is pragmatism we can believe in. Our times demand no less. ■

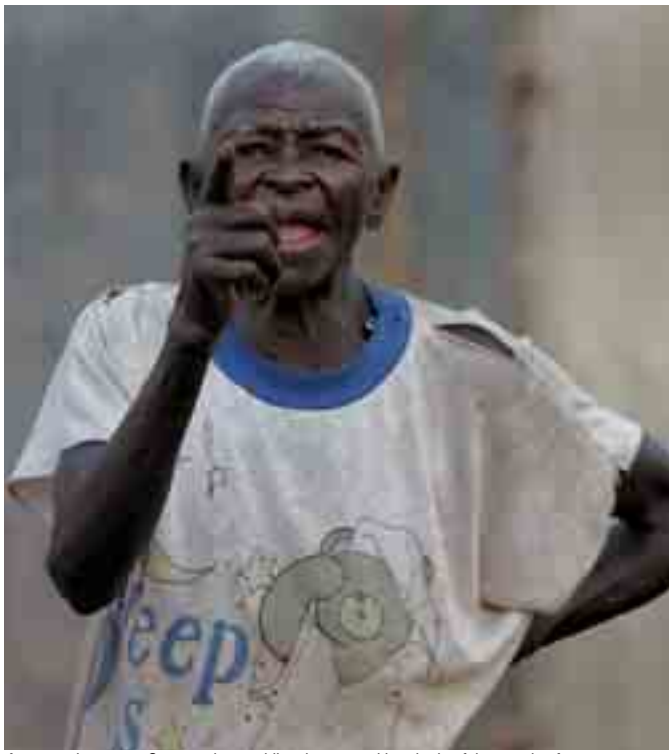
A Crime Against Society

Rape destroyed the social fabric of Congo. Now women are beginning to repair it.

by ANN JONES

Late one afternoon seven years ago, in the village of Kamanyola in eastern Congo, Fatuma Kayengela's husband sent their daughter and her cousin to the market to buy oil for the lamps. When the two 15-year-old girls turned to go back home, they found the way blocked by soldiers, who took them down the road. As darkness fell, Fatuma and her husband went in search of the girls and learned of screams and crying coming from the school. There they found the girls as the rapists had left them. They went to the police station for help, but the police said there was nothing they could do about soldiers. When Fatuma's husband grew angry, they threatened to arrest him. Thankful the girls were still alive, Fatuma took them home.

That was a brave act. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a rape survivor is an outcast, blamed and shamed by local tradition and religion for the only crime pinned squarely on the victim. She is "dirtied," but her greater crime is that in being violated she shrinks the stature of the husband or father to whom she belongs. To regain respect he must throw her out. Fatuma's husband behaved differently: he stood by the girls. Yet as Fatuma watched her daughter's continuing suffering, she felt powerless. "At that time," she says, "I didn't even know enough to take my daughter to the hospital." She determined to learn how to help her child and other survivors of sexual assault; but because rape is a crime women and girls have learned to suffer in shamed silence, she had no idea how many there were.



SCHALK VAN ZUYDAM/AP

A woman in eastern Congo, where soldiers have raped hundreds of thousands of women

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are hundreds of thousands.

The DRC began its ascent to the title of Rape Capital of the World in 1994, when masses of defeated Hutu *génocidaires* (Interahamwe) entered the country from Rwanda. They

Ann Jones, a freelance journalist, is the author, most recently, of Kabul in Winter. *She worked with the Commune des Femmes de Kamanyola in eastern Congo as a volunteer with the International Rescue Committee.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were followed in 1996 by invading Tutsis, the RPF forces of Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who was allied with Congolese rebel Laurent Kabila against Congolese President Mobutu Sese Seko, the desiccated American creation of the cold war who had presided for decades over exploitation of Congo's rich resources and the disintegration of its flimsy colonial institutions. With an eye on those resources, neighboring countries intervened on both sides. By the time peace accords were signed in 2002, more than twenty armies and militias were battling for the DRC's gold, diamonds and coltan, and young Joseph Kabila had succeeded his assassinated father as president. His presidency was affirmed by an election held in 2006 at a cost of nearly $500 million.

Kabila heads a government fabricated (without women's participation in decision-making) to appease and include all factions (except women) among its four vice presidents and thirty-six cabinet ministers. It's one of those unwieldy governments, by now familiar in Africa, in which officials find the means to enrich themselves but nothing to support institutions or pay salaries to civil servants, teachers, doctors, soldiers or police. People in eastern Congo complain that $500 million might have been better spent, because for them, far from the government in Kinshasa, the war goes on to this day. And so does rape.

Look at the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo from the outside and it's hard to see it as anything but a war against women.

As direct targets of men at war, women and girls suffer terribly. The Interahamwe have been singled out as the worst perpetrators of atrocities, but every armed group is guilty of violating women. Men singly or in gangs rape women and girls of all ages. (Recorded victims range in age from 2 months to 83 years.) Men also cut off women's nipples or breasts, mutilate or cut off external genitalia, and eviscerate living pregnant women to remove and kill fetuses. After rape, men commonly insert foreign objects into the vagina: sticks, sand, rocks, knives, burning wood or charcoal, or molten plastic made by melting shopping bags. Killing the rape victim by firing a handgun or rifle inserted in the vagina is a common practice; some victims have survived. Rapists have blinded many women, apparently to prevent identification, and left countless others to die in the forest after chopping off their arms and/or legs. Soldiers also abduct women, and especially girls as young as 10 or 11, as captive "wives." Some escaped women and girls report being chained to trees for months, released only to be gang-raped, day after day. Many report witnessing the death of other captive women and girls, murdered as disciplinary examples or abandoned in the forest when they were no longer "serviceable."

Tens of thousands of rape victims have survived but suffer enduring symptoms of psychological trauma—depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, despair—and debilitating physical problems: crippled or missing limbs, blindness, damaged or destroyed internal organs and/or genitalia and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Thousands have been left with fistula, a complaint often misrepresented by male war correspondents unfamiliar with female anatomy. Broadly, fistula refers to any perforation in the tissues separating the vaginal canal from the urinary tract and/or the rectum. There are several different types of fistula, depending on where the holes occur, but the typical result is uncontrollable leakage through the vagina of urine or feces or both. In less violent times, fistula most commonly results from prolonged labor in childbirth when the fetus presses upon maternal tissues, cuts off blood supply and creates "dead" spots that give way. The younger, and therefore smaller, the mother, the greater the likelihood of prolonged labor and fistula. When women have access to adequate maternal care, fistula is easily prevented; but in the DRC it occurs in remote areas even in the best of times.

Denis Mukwege, the Congolese obstetrician/gynecologist heralded in the international press as a "savior" of rape victims, trained in fistula surgery before the war to treat such complications of childbirth; but in the past decade, as head of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, he has surgically repaired thousands of fistulas, most of them caused by traumatic injury—by brutal multiple rapes or by "foreign objects." He takes heart that in the past year or so, with a decline in militia activity in South Kivu, cases of traumatic fistula have declined as well. Yet among the surgeries he now performs for obstetric fistula, one in three patients is a teenage girl, a former captive "wife" who gave birth years ago and has been living in the forest, outcast, reeking of urine and shit, unaware that she might find help. So far, Panzi's patients have come from the vicinity of Bukavu; with the addition of a mobile unit to venture farther afield, Mukwege says, "we will find many more."

It's true that long before the war Congolese men treated women as lesser creatures, forbidden to plant money-making crops such as coffee and cotton—forbidden even to eat nourishing foods like eggs and chicken. It's true that men routinely used force if necessary to compel women's labor and sexual service. It's true that Congolese men hold notions that promote rape: that having sex makes men stronger, for example, or that having sex with a virgin immunizes against AIDS. And it's true that child rape is traditionally considered an offense only against the father whose property is "spoiled," an offense resolved by "compromise"—that is, a man-to-man payoff from the rapist to the victim's father. But all these cultural factors are insufficient to explain the frequency and unspeakable brutality of rape in the DRC in the past decade. Look at the war in the DRC from the outside and it's hard to see it as anything but a war against women. Just a few months ago, long after the war officially ended, Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert, former deputy UN force commander in the DRC, said, "It is more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier right now in eastern DRC."

It's so dangerous that a special session of the UN Security Council in June passed Resolution 1820 to demand "the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians." The new resolution built on another landmark, Security Council Resolution 1325, which called for women's full participation at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace building (since passing in 2000 with much fanfare, Resolution 1325 has been broadly ignored). Resolution 1820 makes clear that widespread rape of women in war prevents the very participation in public life that Resolution 1325 identified years ago as essential to devising durable peace.

But rape has another dimension as well. As Resolution 1820 notes, during armed conflict "women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group."

What does that mean? It's often said that raping women is intended to "humiliate" men. (One Congolese man revealed the typical male evaluation of a woman's worth when he compared raping a man's wife to using his table without his permission.) But shaming or provoking enemy men is merely the beginning of a process meant to destroy the life of a whole community and/or "cleanse" an area. In eastern Congo, the process works like this: husbands cast out raped wives to fend for themselves, with or without their children. Or raped wives with no visible injuries conceal the fact of rape from their husbands and try to carry on. In either case, women are afraid to venture out to gather firewood, or fetch water, or cultivate their fields. For a time women band together to work the fields, until soldiers abduct a group en masse. Terrified, women begin to neglect their crops, or soldiers steal the produce; and families suffer malnourishment and hunger. With no surplus produce to sell at market, women have no money. They can't pay school fees for their children. Girls are afraid to go to school; boys drop out too. Some men leave the village, shamed by a wife's rape. Some men leave to join a militia, voluntarily or by force. Some men leave to look for work and money in cities far away. Many men never come back. Some outcast women leave too, for cities or truck stops where they take up "survival sex," selling the only asset they have left: their already dirtied bodies.

Shaming or provoking enemy men by raping women is merely the beginning of a process meant to destroy the life of a whole community.

The localized famine spreads. People weaken and grow ill but there is no money to pay for a visit to the hospital, and the trip may be too dangerous. (There are recorded cases of women raped on the way home from hospitals where they were treated for rape.) People begin to die of commonplace conditions like diarrhea, pneumonia and malaria, which they would have survived in better days. A study released early this year by the International Rescue Committee concluded that between August 1998 and April 2007, 5.4 million "excess deaths" occurred in the DRC, most of them from easily preventable and treatable diseases. Significantly, 2.1 million of those deaths occurred after the war formally ended in 2002.

Cultural norms die too when women are raped in the presence of their families; when boys and men are forced to rape their own sisters, mothers or daughters, or are murdered on the spot for refusing; when boy soldiers are compelled to rape babies or grandmothers. So divisive is rape, and the shame and terror that attend it, that even in the best case the family may fall apart. The rare husband who stands by his raped wife finds that his brother's family no longer visits him, nor does his uncle's. The durability of extended family ties, the allegiance of kinfolk, the pleasant give and take of hospitality at the heart of Congolese life—all fade and fracture. Fragments of families pack up and move to places they believe to be safer, leaving empty houses in the village, soon looted by soldiers. In this way the community falls apart. Those who leave are desperate, penniless, often ill with sexually transmitted infections. Those who stay are old, ill, infirm. Those who return find their property ransacked, their tools stolen, their crops and livestock plundered, and that their friends and neighbors have vanished. That's the result of rape as a tactic of war—millions dead and a way of life gone. And along the roads, begging and threatening, are gangs of boys: orphans of war and unwanted offspring of rape who aspire to be soldiers.

People like Fatuma and her family try to carry on, only to find that even when "peace" comes, sexual violence against women and girls continues. The habits of warfare carry over seamlessly into the "peace." And because rape was not acknowledged as a tactic of warfare before the passage of Resolution 1820, soldiers could (and still do) continue to rape civilians while complying with "peace accords" merely by not attacking each other. "Peace building" goes on, "power sharing" governments are formed and amnesty for ex-combatants is declared, even as the leaders in these negotiations continue to wage their shadowy war on women, the wedge of war against communities and cultures. The "durable peace" the UN seeks sinks in a slough of hypocrisy because men of affairs find misogyny so congenial and essential to the arrangements they make for the world.

The number of men held accountable for crimes against women in the DRC is almost nil. One reckoning found that of 14,200 reported rapes between 2005 and 2007 in South Kivu province, where Fatuma's village lies, only 2 percent of rapists were "held accountable," whatever that means. A few men arrested, a few prosecuted perhaps, but those sentenced can be counted on one hand, and few actually stay in jail. A bribe does the trick. The failure to punish anyone for rape or torture gives everyone permission. In *The Greatest Silence*, Lisa Jackson's important film incontrovertibly documenting rape in the DRC, a soldier who laughingly admits to having raped and instigated gang rape many times (he calls it "making love") says that rape "just happens" in wartime, and that when the war is over he won't rape anymore. But why should he stop? The absence of punishment creates a culture of impunity in which those

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

responsible for punishing crime become complicit with criminals. Many men speak of the culture of impunity not as a barbaric breakdown of justice but as today's way of life, a free pass that encourages civilians to take up practices popularized by soldiers. And as combatants are demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life, raped women meet their rapists in the street. For them the terror continues. One in ten of the patients Mukwege treats for traumatic fistula returns to Panzi Hospital, having been raped again. Fatuma's raped daughter, who married and had a child, was raped again two years ago, this time by six soldiers who beat her husband and forced him to watch.

As for Fatuma, after her daughter was raped the first time, she went to a women's meeting called by a French humanitarian aid organization. There she learned that women could help rape survivors and fight back against the terror. She joined other local women to call a meeting in Kamanyola, and more than 1,000 women showed up. Muslim women had to drop out, grounded by their husbands, and Protestants went back to their church groups, leaving about 200 Catholic women to form the Commune des Femmes de Kamanyola (CFK), with Fatuma in the lead. GTZ, the international development arm of the German government, taught them to take rape survivors to the hospital within seventy-two hours for treatment that includes drugs to prevent STDs, HIV and pregnancy. For two years (2001–03), GTZ provided transport and medications, and CFK provided rape survivors.

Then, after the peace accords were signed, came another wave of warfare—and another wave of rape. Fatuma and the women of CFK broke the cultural silence and began to talk to survivors and their families about rape. Fatuma also began to travel to outlying communities to talk to women about how they could help survivors and hold their communities together. When the International Rescue Committee started to work in the area, in 2002, CFK applied for help. IRC specialists in gender-based violence taught them to give supportive counseling to rape survivors and told them about women's rights.

To help Fatuma's group fund itself, IRC bought them a field and trained these experienced cultivators in some advanced farming techniques. In their first season the women produced three tons of maize. IRC bought them two more fields and taught them how to organize their activities and keep useful records. The women set up an office on the main road next door to a base of the FARDC, the national army, and began to talk to the commander about what his own soldiers were doing. They began to visit the homes of outcast rape survivors to explain to husbands and mothers-in-law why they must take raped women back. (The young husband of Fatuma's daughter, who stands by her, is an influential example for men.) They visit the fathers of raped girls and persuade them not to "compromise" with rapists but to prosecute them. They publicly denounce known rapists and help take cases to court, calling rapists and jurists to account. In a province where the justice system is a shambles, CFK has seen a few cases through to convictions. Periodically a delegation travels to the prison to make sure the convicted men are still there. Some, of course, have "escaped."

At every step CFK runs up against old attitudes and new appetites for rape. Charlotte Siapata was tending her small field alone three years ago when two militiamen seized and raped her. Afraid to tell her husband, she turned to Fatuma for help. Fatuma sent her to the hospital and counseled her to stay in her home; and when her husband guessed the truth, Fatuma and others from CFK talked with him as well. Charlotte was now the "soldiers' wife," he said, and useless to him. He denied her money for food for herself and their two children. He refused to pay the children's fees, and they left school. He denied her clothing and shoes. He ordered her to leave the house. "After the rape," Charlotte says, "I could not greet anyone or pass before other people. I felt they could see my evil. Slowly I got over that because I learned from CFK that I was not the first. To be raped by gangs of men—it is very normal for women. But still my husband chased me from the house and made me suffer. And the children too." At last Fatuma led a delegation from CFK and Charlotte's family to tell her husband that he had done enough; he must go to court, divorce her properly and allow her to take her children home to her parents' house. Charlotte says, "The power of CFK made him very afraid. He looked again and he could see me in a different way." Since then, the couple has reached an understanding and had another child. Charlotte believes that God worked through CFK to bring her back to life and restore her family happiness.

Saving is what CFK does. It begins by saving rape survivors, but in effect it saves families, a village and the idea of civic life.

Now a strong leader in CFK, Charlotte helps with the cases of young girls raped in recent weeks not by militiamen but by civilians in the community. A 12-year-old raped by her teacher. A 9-year-old raped by a young boy. A 7-year-old raped by a middle-aged man. An 11-year-old raped by her father. A 7-year-old raped by her pastor. This is something new in the community since the war, and the women of CFK struggle to understand it.

CFK. If you pronounce the acronym in Congolese French with a slight Swahili accent, it sounds like Say-ev-ko—Save Co. Saving is what CFK does. It begins by saving rape survivors, but in effect it saves families, villages and the idea of civic life.

But the women worry about the future. Can they sustain their work? They need maize mills to process their harvest into more profitable maize meal, yet no international NGO has funds to carry them this last step to self-sufficiency. Will the UN let them down too?

The UN's largest peacekeeping force, MONUC, is charged with preventing armed conflict and protecting civilians in the DRC. Yet in eastern Congo its numbers are too few to patrol an area far larger than France and overrun by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

militias that—despite repeated international agreements—have never been disarmed. So it should be no surprise that war rages again just over the provincial border in North Kivu; there the national army tries to turn back the forces of Laurent Nkunda, who professes to protect Tutsis from Hutu *génocidaires* in a relentless reprise of the Rwandan genocide. In Rwanda 1 million people died under orders in three months in 1994; in the DRC 5 million have died in the continuation. As I write, the roads of North Kivu are filling with a quarter-million civilians in flight, with no place to go. Cholera threatens thousands camped in the rain outside the provincial capital. Reports tell of the massacre of civilian men of fighting age—and once again the mass rape of women and girls.

CFK is only one of many women's groups organized in the DRC, just one example of what women can do, with a little security and a little help from the international community, to counteract the centrifugal force of hundreds of thousands of "acts of sexual violence against civilians" and make way for that elusive durable peace. ■

Socialism Is No Longer a Dirty Word

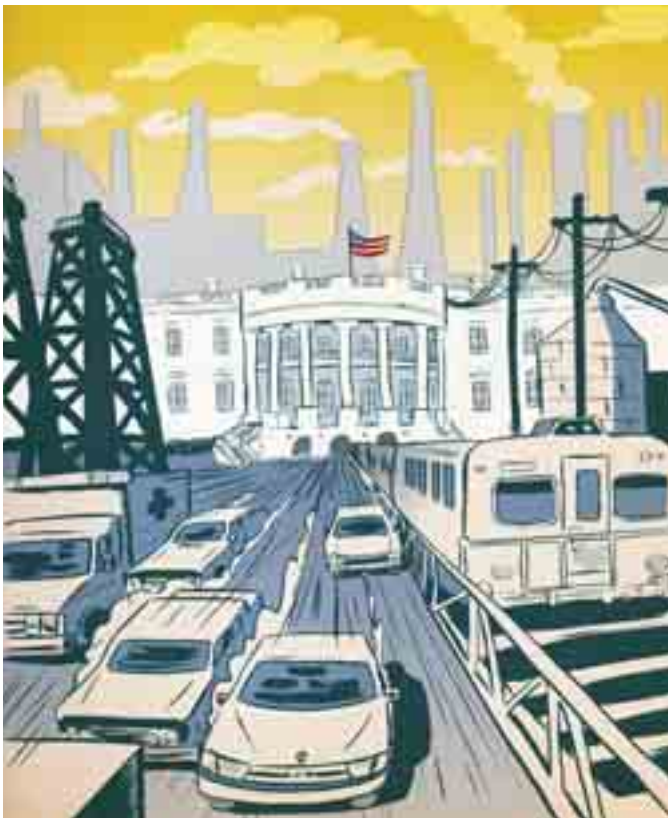
European countries have shown there is a practical case for public ownership.

by ANDRÉ SCHIFFRIN

John McCain's desperate attempts to smear Obama as a socialist during the last weeks of the campaign because of his defense of progressive income taxes are well behind us. Now that Obama's economic team has been named, primarily from the center-right, the question is more likely to be whether he is still a left-wing Democrat. But the attacks were a sign of how far right the Republicans had gone in questioning a policy long accepted by most Americans. We have forgotten that under that notorious left-winger Dwight D. Eisenhower, the tax on the highest bracket was 90 percent. In recent years tax cuts have been used, very effectively, to redistribute income upward. But "socialist" seemed to work as an epithet, replacing "communist," no longer useful now that Russia and China have become capitalist, and "liberal," now overused.

While Socialist parties still play an important role in Western Europe and, increasingly, in Latin America, they have long disappeared from the American scene. Since the death of Michael Harrington, there has been no acknowledged spokesman. Though Bernie Sanders was elected as a socialist, he has not chosen to forward any socialist alternatives. There is no one around to explain what socialist approaches to the present economic crisis might be, what a platform different from Obama's very careful centrist arguments would be like.

In 1942 a quarter of the population thought that socialism, of the kind that would be elected in nearly all of Western Europe, would be a "good thing." Socialist ideas were so popular that Harry Truman, old-style Democratic machine politician that he was, ran on a platform well to the left of Obama's—or of any of his Democratic successors. He faced important competitors to his left, not only the Socialist Party's Norman Thomas but also the more popular Progressive Party candidate, Henry Wallace. Truman thus argued for a socialized national health insurance plan, for



RYAN INZANA

more TVAs as well as more public housing, hospitals and the like. Full employment, not tax cuts, was then the American priority.

To be sure, socialists, like the Democrats, have long argued for greater equality, economic as well as social. One can still see the effects of their policies in the Scandinavian countries and in France, where, despite having elected the conservative Nicolas Sarkozy, the top fifth of the population earns around four times what the bottom fifth does (as opposed to the United States, where the top 1 percent notoriously gets 20 percent of the national income). The French, along with the pre-Blair British and others, use their tax dollars in part to guarantee every citizen full medical care as well as an effective and free educational system through the

André Schiffrin is the author of the recently published A Political Education *(Melville House), in which he examines socialist ideas in postwar America.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

university level. These extensive social payments, which all Socialist parties have implemented throughout Western Europe, give their citizens a far higher overall standard of living than we can hope to have.

But socialists have traditionally argued for more than the welfare state. In order to guarantee equitable distribution, they have urged public ownership of crucial parts of the economy. Natural resources have been a major argument here, with oil and gas being obvious candidates for public ownership, since no individual capitalist has been responsible for their creation. Ironically, this is the case in Alaska, where those resources are publicly owned, as Governor Sarah Palin has boasted, allowing her to send substantial annual checks to each of her constituents. The checks would be larger if the oil companies were also publicly owned, as they are in many countries.

Public ownership is not an all-inclusive dogma but one that has been applied pragmatically. In postwar Britain, the coal mines, the steel mills and the railways were nationalized, in part to provide the necessary funding to keep them running (as, in effect, happened here with Amtrak). When Margaret Thatcher's government began to privatize some of these industries, the results were shocking even to conservatives. Rail prices skyrocketed and accidents became so common that the British have begun to rue their decisions. When water was privatized, prices rose to incredible heights while the heads of the new companies paid themselves millions, showing how easily the private sector can redistribute wealth from the many to the lucky few.

France nationalized its banks after the war and again under the Socialist François Mitterrand, to allow it to direct loans into socially useful areas. We have seen, in recent weeks, the international success of Gordon Brown's approach to a true nationalization of British banks. Remembering his socialist background, Brown opted for true control, rather than giving the bigger banks vast amounts with which to buy their competitors and continue to pay dividends, as has happened with Henry Paulson's "socialization" of the banks. Reversing those decisions should be on Obama's agenda. Using Brown's approach, the $20 billion just paid to Citigroup would have sufficed to buy the whole company, at the price the stock had fallen to, instead of settling for a symbolic 7.8 percent share of the equity. It might have been interesting to see what could be done with a bank that was committed to lending rather than gambling.

Over the years, European automobile companies have also been nationalized, like Renault in France and Volkswagen in Germany, allowing them to compete, for decades, with the private sector and giving their workers a share in the management, as is still the case in many of Germany's industries. (To my amazement, *Hardball* host Chris Matthews discussed the possibility of nationalizing the Big Three auto firms the other night. When questioned about this, GM's president and chief operating officer Frederick Henderson gave a one-sentence lie, saying he was familiar with the European experiments and that they had failed.) The European auto companies were so successful that conservatives argued they should be privatized, which put them at greater risk competing against the cheaper car makers of Eastern Europe and Asia. An autoworker in Slovakia, for example, makes a quarter as much as his French or German counterpart, which has caused an increasing movement of jobs to the countries paying lower wages. Were these companies and others still publicly owned, they could choose lower profits over sending their work overseas. France recently imposed large fines on profitable private firms that chose to close their factories in France to increase their profits even more. Most of the French agree that keeping jobs and decent wages going is a basic responsibility of industry, private or public. With the growing protectionist sentiment in the United States, such an approach might prove very popular. Obama has talked about renegotiating NAFTA, but these constraints on the private sector might also be considered.

Socialists have long realized that if government can't control big business, business will control government, as has happened so flagrantly.

In addition to such measures, a strong case could be made for the public ownership of industries that depend overwhelmingly on American government purchases and on subsidized research. The military is clearly in that category, as is the pharmaceutical industry. The ever increasing cost of Medicare is clearly linked to the outrageous markups by pharmaceutical firms that have often received government money to develop their products while refusing to seek cures for illnesses that are insufficiently profitable. In addition to capping prices, the government could buy a controlling interest in shares. Once it became clear that the government as stockholder would give priority to the rights of consumers, the price of shares would diminish considerably. This would probably save us all a great deal of money in the long run. Such a case for public ownership might even win popular support.

Socialists have long realized that if government is unable to control big business, businesses will control the government and its regulators, as has happened so flagrantly in recent years. In difficult times, it is all the more important, as we have seen in the banking crisis, that those controlling the financial industry not use the government simply to bail themselves out but to help the overall economy. Those arguing for unregulated private ownership, with ever increasing profits as their only goal, have come close to ruining the very economy they had so long controlled. The Friedmanite myth of the perfect market lies in ruins. It is clear that more and more people, here and abroad, are looking for new alternatives. As the global crisis continues, more of us, not just Obama, may want to begin to consider some of these socialist solutions. Everyone now remembers that Franklin Roosevelt initially ran on a very cautious, even conservative, platform. As he discovered, changing events may demand ideas that, until recently, seemed unthinkable. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Meddling in Kenya's Elections

Finger-wagging remains the hallmark of US policy toward Africa. Will Obama change that?

by KAREN ROTHMYER

Nairobi

In the past few weeks, I've talked with a lot of Kenyans about what they think Barack Obama's victory means for them personally and for the country. Many of the younger ones see him as an inspiration: if he can make it, so can they. Some talk about their hope that more Americans will visit Kenya in order to learn more about his roots, giving the tourism industry a much needed shot in the arm. But the comment that has stuck with me is one I heard from a political activist named Mwalimu Mati on the morning after the vote. "The Kenyan election last year was botched, and we don't have a legally elected government," he said. "Obama gives us optimism that there can be change here, too."

Change. It's the word on everyone's lips here, just as it is in the United States. After a violent few weeks last January following a contested presidential election, Kenyans would like nothing better than a way out of the political, land and ethnic clashes that periodically afflict the country and that in the most recent case could so easily have turned into full-scale civil war. A Gallup poll released in October showed that 70 percent don't think the election was honest and that only 25 percent believe that the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki, actually won his re-election bid. On the economic front, with inflation running at close to 30 percent and nearly half the population living in poverty, a majority think conditions are getting worse.

Yet where that change will come from is not clear. Right now, members of the coalition government that Kofi Annan brokered to end the carnage seem to be spending more time sniping at one another and maneuvering for influence than dealing with the root causes of the election disaster.

If the past is any indication, the United States is not likely to be a lot of help—any more than it has been elsewhere on the continent. From its support of the apartheid regime in South Africa to its endorsement of Kibaki's win despite strong evidence that showed he'd lost, US policy in Africa has always been much more about preserving the status quo than welcoming new directions. And from what I've seen since returning to Kenya in 2005 after many years away, finger-wagging—metaphorically if not literally—remains the hallmark of American diplomacy.

"US policy has not changed very much since independence" in 1963, says professor Macharia Munene, a Kenyan historian who got his PhD in the United States. "The common thread is telling other people what to do." Recalling US bullying tactics aimed at getting Kenya to pass an anti-terrorism bill that Muslims in particular felt would violate their civil rights, he argues that even when it comes to terrorism—which Kenyans know firsthand, having experienced two bombings linked to Al Qaeda that caused the deaths or injuries of well over 4,000 people—

KAREL PRINSLOO/AP

A Masai woman casts her ballot during the December 2007 presidential election.

Washington takes an imperious approach. "Terrorism is a legitimate concern, but it's overdone," says Munene. "The US acts like it's the only one who knows what to do."

According to Kenyans and Westerners with experience on the continent, there's not a lot of reason so far to think—though there is certainly plenty of hope—that Obama administration policy on Africa is going to be much different. During the campaign Obama turned for advice to veterans of the Clinton administration, which, among other things, failed to act in Rwanda, balked at submitting Americans to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and pushed free-trade agreements that African countries rebelled against as unfair. Obama's top Africa advisers have spoken favorably about the Pentagon's new command, Africom, which reinforces an already overmilitarized approach to Africa, while Obama has offered no meaningful criticism of the Bush administration's disastrous policy toward Somalia, Kenya's northeastern neighbor. That policy has seen the United States bomb Somali towns, killing dozens of civilians; "rendition" suspects and their families; and send suitcases full of cash from Nairobi to Somali warlords, all in the name of fighting Al Qaeda. Obama will inherit a military aid budget for Kenya that was eight times higher in the five years after 9/11 than in the five years before and a State Department that has increasingly ceded policy-making to the Pentagon.

"The US could return to being a beacon of hope for democracy," says Maina Kiai, until recently head of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. "But it needs to accept that creativity and dialogue go a lot farther than 'our way or the highway.'" Writing in the online *Pambazuka News*, US academic Steve Sharra raised the question of whether these days Obama even thinks about Africa at all. In Obama's first book, Sharra notes, he devoted a large amount of space to exploring his roots in Kenya, but in his second, he barely mentioned the continent, and then, "no longer as the place Obama spent a lifetime yearning for, but rather as the known poster child for the world's worst

Karen Rothmyer, former managing editor of The Nation, *teaches journalism at the University of Nairobi.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

maladies and disorder." When Obama visited Kenya in 2006, he was greeted by ecstatic crowds, but to many he sounded the same as any other US official, preaching to Kenyans about what was wrong with their country and what they needed to do. "I hope he's not like big brother," says Perez Olindo, former director of the Kenya National Parks, who is nonetheless very positive about the Obama victory. He adds, "There is still paternalism among the G-8. You feel that paternalism in that they want you to remain only a provider of natural resources."

Just how much of a break with the past is needed in Africa is amply demonstrated by the US role in Kenya's 2007 presidential election, in which Kibaki was declared the winner over his chief challenger, Raila Odinga. Kibaki, an economist who served under the country's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, in the 1960s, pointed to the country's rising GDP during his first five-year term as evidence of his effectiveness. Odinga, whose father was a populist—the Americans at the time labeled him a Communist—opponent of Kenyatta, campaigned on a promise of change, arguing that the country's high unemployment and uneven regional development were evidence of the need for new leadership.

At the time of the election, Ken Flottman was country director for the International Republican Institute (IRI), a Congressionally mandated organization funded mainly by USAID, the State Department and the National Endowment for Democracy. Flottman recalls that in the months leading up to the vote, the US Embassy conveyed the impression that it believed Kibaki would win. "As time went on, some of the polling we were doing showed it was more complicated, but I got the sense that the embassy wasn't interested in hearing it," he says. "The embassy saw the top line of GDP growth but didn't see that nothing was really changing for most Kenyans."

'The US needs to accept that creativity and dialogue go a lot further than "our way or the highway."' —Maina Kiai, human rights official

At times, according to Flottman, US Ambassador Michael Ranneberger appeared to him to be actively trying to help Kibaki's chances. In one case, he says, when a horse-race poll done by the country's top commercial pollster showed Odinga pulling ahead, Ranneberger "was keen to release our poll, which showed Kibaki was more popular." Flottman declined. As he explains it, it has always been IRI's policy to probe issues of general concern to voters and to publicize those findings, in keeping with its democracy-building mandate. But as part of its remit from USAID, which funds the polls and which answers to the State Department, IRI has routinely shared horse-race information only privately with US officials. (Ranneberger declined to discuss this incident or anything about the US role in the election.)

While I had only an outsider's view of the election process, I, too, saw things that made me wonder. On December 17, little more than a week before the election, Ranneberger gave a curious interview to one of the major dailies. Despite having described corruption in Kenya as "like a cloud hanging over the nation" a few months after his arrival in 2006, and having told a university audience in mid-2007 that "not enough has been done to bring to justice those responsible for corruption," he now claimed that corruption wasn't a big deal after all. "I always point out that we have lots of corruption even in the US," Ranneberger said breezily, mentioning Enron as an example.

Such incidents, in retrospect, were a portent of what was to happen to the exit poll IRI conducted on election day with the aid of a local polling firm, Strategic Public Relations and Research, assisted by polling experts from the University of California, San Diego. The poll—which asked voters whom they'd voted for—showed that Odinga had bested Kibaki by an eight-point margin. This was in contrast to the official figures released later, amid chaos and allegations of rigging, that showed Kibaki winning by a two-point margin. Plans called for releasing the poll, the only one of its kind (a second exit poll by a different organization was begun but not completed), the day after the election. But instead, IRI's top Washington-based officials, claiming they had serious doubts about the poll's validity, refused to make the results public. Flottman says he kept pressing for an answer as to why. "I was eventually told that it wasn't in the best interest of IRI," he says.

Ranneberger was given the poll results on the evening of election day, December 27. This was three days before the official announcement that Kibaki had won touched off weeks of rioting in which more than 1,000 Kenyans died and as many as 350,000 were made homeless. Nonetheless, Ranneberger went on to tell the *Washington Post* on December 31 that "the US would accept" the announcement that Kibaki had won, and the State Department congratulated Kibaki on his win—a position that it later retracted after the European Union raised concerns about election rigging.

Why did US officials not take note of their own poll? Why did they in fact not just ignore it but suppress it? "The results were unpalatable," says one high-level, non-American international official who declines to be identified because of the official's continued working relationship with the US government. The official adds that outside experts involved in the election process were trying to encourage "transparency and openness. Hiding information doesn't conform to those principles."

An even bigger issue is whether the exit poll's release might have altered the outcome of the race. Njeri Kabeberi, head of the Center for Multiparty Democracy, a nonpartisan group that focuses on party building, says that if the results had been made public quickly "it would have made a big, big difference" by deterring vote tampering. That opinion is shared by many, but not all, outsiders. Tom Wolf, a US polling expert who lives in Kenya, says, "It would have fueled [Odinga's party's] claims to legitimacy, but Kibaki wouldn't have given up without a fight." Wolf, who consults for a rival firm to Strategic, also says he has some reservations about Strategic's polling methods.

Flottman, for his part, continued to press for the poll's release, even after he left the country at the expiration of his contract. "The fact is, it's the only independent source of data" on the election, he says. And in the end, after the University of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

California polling experts made a public presentation on the data and methodology in Washington, IRI backed down on its earlier position. After what it described as an "extensive analysis" that reduced Odinga's margin from eight to six points—still significantly larger than the poll's margin of error of less than two points—it made the poll data public in August.

By then, it was way too late to make any difference: pushed by the international community, Odinga had dropped his insistence that he had won, and he and Kibaki had agreed to form a coalition government, with Odinga installed in the newly created and, as it quickly became apparent, relatively powerless job of prime minister.

Even in the forging of that coalition agreement, however, the United States continued its heavy-handed meddling, according to people involved in the process. While Odinga's party and civil society groups were pushing for a short-term coalition government, during which constitutional reforms could be carried out, to be followed by another election, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice insisted that the coalition term be five years, the same as a regular presidential term. "The US wanted what Kibaki wanted: another five years," says Maina Kiai, the human rights official. "Now there is nothing happening; there are no reforms."

Even more worrying is Kenyans' growing cynicism about electoral politics. "Faith in the integrity of the election process was seriously compromised" by the election tampering, says the pollster Wolf—an observation borne out by the October Gallup poll, which recorded a steep decline in Kenyans' trust in the honesty of elections.

What appears to have happened in Kenya is by no means unique. In 2005 the United States rallied around Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi—Ethiopia being a major ally in the "war on terror"—despite evidence that he had lost badly. And US endorsement of dubious results in other African countries, most notably oil-rich Nigeria, have been the norm for years. Still, there's something particularly depressing about the fact that it occurred in Kenya, whose citizens I've often thought were the most optimistic people on the planet—filling night classes at the university and seemingly buying and recommending to one another every self-help book ever published.

If Obama is to bring his "change" philosophy to bear on US policy toward Africa, he could do no better than to start here in Kenya. That includes more trade opportunities and fairer trading practices, assistance in bringing peace to Somalia and Sudan, and an emphasis on partnership, according to an array of Kenyans I questioned. Above all, Kenyans are looking for what everyone in the world wants: respect. On the day after Obama's election, I sat down with a group of students at the university and asked them to tell me the first words that came to their mind when they thought of America. The answers were painfully blunt: "Looking down at people." "Arrogant." "Rigid." "Discrimination." "Thinking they should rule the world."

No one in Kenya expects Obama to produce miracles. But changing perceptions like these would be a start. After that, maybe he could ask Kenyans what they'd like to see in the way of change they can believe in. ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

Vietnam. I've been back dozens of times in my work. It is always in my memory (see www.AgentOrangeChildren.org).
Ken Herrmann Jr.

Bellingham, Wash.
I was a hanger-on at the *Newsweek* office in Saigon in 1971–72. One small extra note: I remember Alex Shimkin concluding from his "captured documents" that the peak killing hour was the time when school let out every afternoon in the Delta.
Richard Brummett

Port Angeles, Wash.
I hope Nick Turse will cover Linebacker 1, a shelling and bombing operation off Quang Tri province, April to September 1972. I was in the Navy, a cook on the destroyer Hamner, DD-718. The North Vietnamese Army had overrun the province, and we were ordered up from the South to shell them. We lobbed in 11,000 forty-pound, five-inch rounds—shrapnel, white phosphorous and lead. The range of our twin mount was five miles. Almost every civilian (rice farmers) in the province lived within five miles of the coast.

The NVA dug in among the civilians so that when we shelled and bombed we'd kill and maim civilians as well, thus undermining the morale of the South Vietnamese Army. It became a one-way, open-ended slugging match, with the civilians caught in the middle. I believe the Hamner killed between 600 and 6,000 civilians. There were twenty other destroyers and cruisers involved, according to my ship's yearbook. I've read our Air Force ran daily bombing missions. Altogether I believe we killed 50,000–100,000 civilians in Linebacker 1, mostly women, children and elderly. It still haunts me, every day.
Bill Bokamper

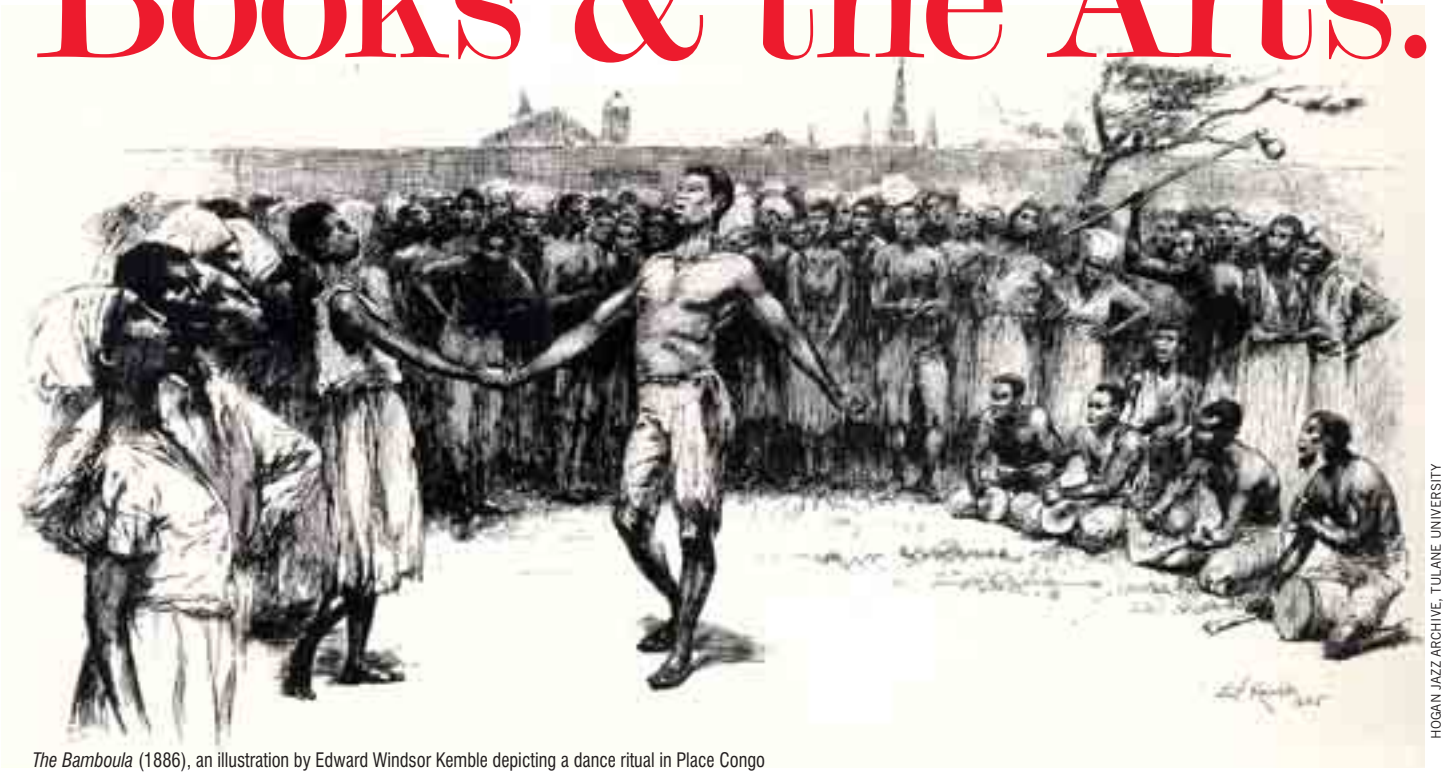
New York City
During the late '60s I was friends with an ex-ranger who told me of his Vietnam experiences. As a scout he witnessed a group of Phoenix program members directed by plainclothes Americans enter a village and massacre its people, cutting open pregnant women, etc. Later his unit was brought to the scene and told it had been the work of the Vietcong! Another story concerned the Nungs. He came into a clearing and saw a group of Nungs and Vietcong prisoners. The prisoners were tied up with their weapons pointed at themselves so that any movement would put pressure on the triggers. The Nungs were smoking opium, watching their prisoners slowly kill themselves. The Phoenix and Nung operations were both CIA run. General Ewell was in the fine tradition of the US Cavalry and European colonial warfare, but the Nung and Phoenix programs were something special.
P. Shapiro

Richmond, Va.
The relevance of Operation Speedy Express to our own time cannot be overlooked. When did the US military undertake a culture of murder against innocents, versus conducting a war where deaths in the heat of battle are expected?

I am not in a position to judge what happens in a firefight, but it is obvious that this same culture of murder seems to have matriculated to private contractors who have been all too satisfied with the way they do business in "protecting" US interests. That contractors such as Blackwater seem to behave with apparent immunity and impunity belies attempted constraints on a culture passed on to its successor. A firefight obligates one to self-defense; however, murder by any other name is still…
Riad Mahayni

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books & the Arts.



HOGAN JAZZ ARCHIVE, TULANE UNIVERSITY

The Bamboula (1886), an illustration by Edward Windsor Kemble depicting a dance ritual in Place Congo

In Congo Square

by JOSHUA JELLY-SCHAPIRO

In 1682, the French explorer Robert Cavelier de La Salle set out from the Great Lakes and canoed down to the mouth of the Mississippi River, claiming its great watershed for Louis XIV. La Salle, a fur trader in Quebec more concerned with his own enrichment than with the crown's glory, returned to France and presented Louis with a false map showing the river's mouth close to Spain's silver mines in New Mexico, thereby winning the king's support to establish a colony. La Salle died before he could successfully set it up. But the French crown, competing with Britain and Spain for control of North America, sponsored a series of attempts to build a foothold in the marshy swamps of the Mississippi's delta.

It wasn't until 1718 that a French settlement of any permanence was established in the region. In that year, La Nouvelle-Orléans was founded adjacent to a centuries-old portage site, where the area's Houma and Choctaw people dragged canoes between the river and a large inland bay, across whose shallow waters lay the nearby Gulf of Mexico. The centerpiece of a colonial venture by which France's ruler, the Duc d'Orleans, hoped to enrich his treasury through a newly chartered Company of the Indies, his namesake city was laid out on ambitious lines. Willing settlers were scarce, though, and no riches were forthcoming.

Effectively abandoned by the French crown in 1731, the colony was governed from that time by local elites, its levee becoming a bustling free-for-all of traders peddling everything from Mississippi furs to Martinique sugar and Mexican ceramics and maize. New Orleans's reputation as a low swamp of race-mixing and sin was present from the start and—as Shannon Lee Dawdy shows in *Building the Devil's Empire*, her penetrating study of the colony's founding—cited frequently as the explanation for its "failure."

In French New Orleans, "smuggling not only helped fill the gaps of collapsed mercantilism," Dawdy writes, "it was the basis of the local *political* economy." Dawdy belabors this point throughout her book, which is slowed at times by bumpy prose, but she shows clearly how Nouvelle-Orléans—with its intra-American trade and tenuous ties to the metropole—became, by the 1740s, a self-consciously Creole place. (Here, she defines Creole as a person of European or African descent born in the New World, hewing to "the eighteenth-century Louisiana meaning of 'native born'"—as opposed to the later widespread use of the word to connote cultural mixing or hybridity.) That Creole identity informed France's decision to let the estranged colony go, as Louis XV handed it off to his cousin Carlos III and Spain, who in 1768 encountered a Creole revolt—a sign that this "rogue colony" (Dawdy's phrase) would not be an easy rule.

What is unique about New Orleans, as Ned Sublette recounts in *The World That Made New Orleans*, an absorbing history of the city's rise, is how its identity was shaped by three colonial eras in rapid succession. As Sublette traces in his brisk *longue durée* account of New Orleans's first century, the Spanish—whose era began in earnest a few months after the Creoles' revolt—brought with them new laws, a new language and a new influx of African slaves. In the event, the Creoles didn't do badly; intra-Caribbean

Building the Devil's Empire
French Colonial New Orleans.
By Shannon Lee Dawdy.
Chicago. 320 pp. $35.

The World That Made New Orleans
From Spanish Silver to Congo Square.
By Ned Sublette.
Lawrence Hill. 360 pp. $24.95.

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro is a doctoral student in geography at the University of California.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trade remained their lifeblood. The colony's permanent population, fed by an influx of German planters, Spanish merchants and French Acadians expelled from British Canada, rose from some 2,500 in 1760 to more than 8,000 in 1800, transforming a dissolute town into a bustling small city.

By the century's last decades, New Orleans's growth was also sustained by a burgeoning traffic of wooden flatboats from upriver, as Anglo-American settlers poured into the western reaches of Virginia and Carolina (out of whose territory were carved the new states of Kentucky and Tennessee in the 1790s). As these "Kaintucks" began developing the lands abutting the Mississippi, river-borne trade became increasingly crucial to the American economy. That New Orleans would become a part of the United States began to appear inevitable, as Sublette shows. The manner in which this occurred, however, was anything but predictable, and was occasioned by the United States' entry into the kind of Great Power politics from which it had, in its revolutionary youth, claimed exception.

New Orleans's Creoles, Jefferson wrote, 'were as uncapable of self-government as children.'

The story of New Orleans isn't merely rich with the enduring tensions of American history—between Old World and New, nation and federation, slavery and freedom. It is also in many ways at the center of American history: the city's acquisition was the midwife of American empire, and prompted the spread of a system of racial slavery whose rise led directly to one of our history's defining events—the Civil War. New Orleans—the "inevitable city on an impossible site," as one geographer memorably called it—has figured since 1803 not only as a crucial pivot of the US economy but also as an essential wellspring of its culture.

In the 1790s Spain was in decline as an imperial power, its Armada defeated, its treasury empty. Shortly after Napoleon Bonaparte took power in France, by coup d'état, in November 1799, King Carlos IV entered into secret negotiations to cede Louisiana back to the French. The agreement was made formal on October 1, 1800, in the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso. In March 1801, reports of Napoleon's secret acquisition reached the United States' newly elected Republican president, Thomas Jefferson. For Jefferson, the ownership of New Orleans by a weak Spain—whose governors had allowed US merchants to use the city for trade—was tolerable; the prospect of its falling to France, which was becoming the world's pre-eminent military power, was of grave concern. Jefferson conveyed to Napoleon that though the United States fondly desired peace, he would reluctantly go to war over New Orleans if necessary. Federalists like Alexander Hamilton urged Jefferson simply to take the city by force.

In early 1803 Jefferson made a last attempt to avoid war, directing his ambassador in France to attempt to purchase New Orleans for the United States. Jefferson also dispatched his protégé James Monroe to Europe on a mission "upon whose event," he wrote Monroe at the time, "depends the future destinies of this republic." If the purchase attempt failed, the Anglophobe Jefferson instructed Monroe, he was to continue on to London to seek a military alliance with the British (who could be expected to welcome the chance to counter their rival). Monroe went no further than Paris. Napoleon's representative stunned the Americans by offering not merely New Orleans but the entire Louisiana Territory—an immense tract of more than 500 million acres extending upriver to Canada and westward clear to the Rockies. The bargain price was 60 million francs ($15 million). Jefferson had effectively bought a third of the continent for 3 cents an acre.

The reason the inscrutable Napoleon proffered this "noble bargain" had its roots in his shifting strategy. Just months before, Napoleon had appeared intent on building a new French empire in America. However, the first step in his New World plan—to quell a slave revolution in the French Indies and retake the lucrative sugar colony of Saint-Domingue—had met with ruin. The force of 25,000 he'd dispatched to the Caribbean under his brother-in-law Charles LeClerc had made landfall in Saint-Domingue, and after LeClerc tricked the slaves' leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, into a meeting, he took Toussaint captive (Toussaint would die in a French dungeon). When the colony's 500,000 blacks realized LeClerc's true intentions, and yellow fever began to rip through his ranks, his force was routed. (Early the next year, Toussaint's successor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, would announce the founding of the independent Republic of Haiti.) Napoleon, it seems, had elected to cut his New World losses and focus his imperial eyes on Europe instead. Selling Louisiana provided necessary monies; it also headed off a prospective alliance between Britain and the United States.

Under the Purchase Treaty, Louisiana's white inhabitants were to be granted the full rights of US citizenship. For a new nation founded on the idea that government by a distant power violated natural law, taking a colony of its own was vexing. The prospect of actually granting representation to the polyglot populace near the Mississippi's mouth—French- and Spanish-speaking rather than English-; Catholic rather than Protestant; many of its "whites" of evidently mixed descent—proved more vexing still. The city's Creoles, Jefferson wrote, were "as incapable of self-government as children"; for nine years Louisiana was governed by a colonial administrator appointed by the president. While New Orleans's "foreign" culture was troublesome, perhaps most unsettling of all was the density and relative freedom of its blacks. Its free people of color were far greater in number than those in Anglo-American cities like Charleston, South Carolina. Moreover, under the Spanish, its slaves enjoyed comparatively far greater rights than they would be accorded under the Anglo-American system. And it is this combination of factors, as Sublette writes, by which the city provided "an alternative path of development for African-American culture."

In French New Orleans, a *code noir* had nominally regulated the treatment of slaves and allowed them the right to assemble on the Sabbath for worship and market. Under the Spanish, all slaves were permitted to request contracts to buy their freedom, to own property and—most critical for the development of its culture—to continue to socialize en masse each weekend. The place where New Orleans's slaves came to meet, from the mid-1700s until the 1840s (when their gatherings were banned by the Americans), was a grassy square at the edge of the old city, which came to be known as Place Congo, later Congo Square.

The importance of what happened in Congo Square, not only to the history of New Orleans but to American culture at large, is neatly caught in a phrase that becomes a leitmotif of Sublette's book. "On sabbath evening," recorded the writer H.C. Knight on visiting the city in 1819, "the African slaves meet on the green, by the swamp, and rock the city with their Congo dances." According to Sublette, this is the first use of "rock," as verb and metaphor, in the manner that would a century and a half later become common to the idioms of pop music and youth culture worldwide. Tales of those "Congo dances" are not limited to the domain of scholars alone; they are rich in the oral lore of a city

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that claims to have invented not only jazz but funk (whose name perhaps derives from the Kikongo *lufuki*, for strong body odor) and where, as Sublette notes, in a rudimentary studio not one block from Congo Square in 1947, Roy Brown recorded "Good Rockin' Tonight," a tune with as much claim as any to being the first rock 'n' roll song.

Of course, one can no more pinpoint the birth of rock 'n' roll—as Sublette acknowledges—than definitively trace the many African strands that inform the black cultures of the New World. This doesn't stop Sublette, whose energized, digressive style evokes a brashly erudite bar stool raconteur, from doing his part for early New Orleans. As in his previous book, *Cuba and Its Music* (2004), a widely praised account of that island's history "from the first drums to the mambo," music here becomes a means to trace the movement of peoples and the evolution of place. While the general reader is well served by Sublette's synoptic account of New Orleans's history within the broader context of the eighteenth-century Atlantic, what most distinguishes his book is its original research into the timbre and effect of the rhythms that filled the muddy streets and Creole dance halls of libertine New Orleans from the start.

Sublette is a sonic sleuth charting the successive waves of Africans who shaped this black city's culture: from the first arrival, in Nouvelle-Orléans, of two slave ships from Benin carrying the Ardra people, from whose *foddun* spiritual practice derives the core of Louisiana voodoo; to the influx during the early French period of Wolof and Bambara people from the Senegal River in West Africa, whose melismatic singing and stringed instruments were crucial forerunners of blues and the banjo; to the Spanish era's preponderance of slaves from the Central African forest culture of Kongo, whose hand-drummed polyrhythms came to undergird dance rhythms from Havana to Harlem. Drawing on travelers' sketches and his wide knowledge of Afro-Caribbean music, Sublette conjures up a vivid picture of what these scenes in Congo Square may have looked and sounded like.

As with all work of this kind—and all writing about music that exists neither in recording nor notation—these genealogies involve much conjecture and guesswork. Sins of overenthusiasm are here easily forgiven, however. Even if the veins and streams from Congo Square to today are best understood to be as much metaphoric as empirical, it is not hard to credit that in Sabbath-day gatherings there, important seeds were sown for the growth of the astonishing musics with which New Orleans and the United States

WWW.THELIBERALCARD.ORG

I'M A CARD-CARRYING LIBERAL

THE LIBERAL CARD

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, BE A BARGAIN-HUNTING LIBERAL.
GET (AND GIVE!) YEAR-ROUND LIBERAL DISCOUNTS.
BUY YOURS TODAY AT WWW.THELIBERALCARD.ORG.

A PROJECT OF LivingLIBERALLY

The only universal optical instrument…

PANSCOPE

(the complete optical system)
from us only $59.95 (Why pay more?)*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

This is a little optical marvel. **PANSCOPE** (only 2" long) contains a complete optical system in its tiny body. You may use it as a 3x telescope or as a unique 3x telescope-loupe. In its magnifying mode, it delivers magnifiers and loupes at 5x, 10x, and 15x enlargement. And to top it all, it also functions as a 30x microscope of laboratory quality.

This marvelous little instrument, developed in Wetzlar (Germany), home of famous Leica cameras, is the product of one of Asia's finest makers. Its coated optics are of superb quality, delivering the image with brilliant luminosity, in needle-sharp focus, with absolute clarity and with full chromatic correction.

PANSCOPE is the indispensable first choice of scientists and professionals and of just about everybody who wants and needs to see the infinite detail in life that is not readily available to the unaided eye.

• PANSCOPE *is beautifully gift-boxed, comes with its neatly fitted leather case and with a plastic "tripod" for extended observations at 15x and 30x.*

***And here is the even better deal: Buy two PANSCOPES for $119.90 and we'll send you a third one with our compliments – absolutely FREE!** You will be amazed and delighted with this wonderful optical instrument. Do yourself a favor. Order your **Panscope(s)** today!

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail, or by fax and pay by check or AMEX/Visa/MasterCard. Please give order code shown. Add $6.95 S/H for one, $9.90 for three and sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund postage. For customer service or wholesale information, please call (415) 356-7801.

Please give order code Z128

jomira
division of jomira/advance
470 Third Street, #211, San Francisco, CA 94107

© Order by toll-free phone: (800) 600-2777 or (fastest!) by fax: (415) 356-7804 ©
Visit our website at www.jomira.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are so lovingly identified today.

Sublette's account ends decades before the advent of jazz—that quintessence of African-America born on European instruments in the late 1800s—though not before he explicates how the neighborhood with which jazz is most closely associated "became French." As with that slippery term "Creole," the meaning and source of the French Quarter's "Frenchness" has changed over time. Its street plan comes from its French founders, but its oldest buildings were erected during the Spanish era. And as Sublette writes, the bulk of its "French" character dates from the influx, following the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804, of thousands of Francophone planters and "Creoles of color" fleeing the blood-soaked Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue—especially the arrival, in 1809, of some 9,000 refugees who had a spent a decade-plus in eastern Cuba before being expelled by the island's Spanish governor. Not only did the Haitian Revolution help precipitate New Orleans's becoming a part of the United States (with some help, as it happens, from Jefferson, who, despite his hostility to Toussaint's cause, covertly supplied his troops with arms to weaken Napoleon's hand); so too did its aftermath ensure that New Orleans remained a "foreign" place for its first decades in the country.

Memorial and Honorary Gifts to

The Nation.

Memorial and honorary gifts to *The Nation* are a meaningful way of honoring someone (a recent graduate, for example) or expressing your sympathy in times of loss. The Nation Legacy Group will see that an elegant card acknowledging your gift, supporting the work and future of *The Nation*, is sent according to your wishes. Simply send us your gift, the name of the person you wish to honor or memorialize, and the name and address of the person to whom the gift card should be sent. By making such a gift, you help ensure that both the principles we stand for, and the forum in which we fight for them, will be around for generations to come.

The Nation Legacy Group

The Nation.

33 IRVING PLACE, NEW YORK, NY 10003

212-209-5427

Today the Louisiana Purchase is recalled as the great achievement of Jefferson's presidency. At the time, his acquisition enjoyed wide popular support. Jefferson himself—a Republican who'd spent the nation's infancy arguing for a weak executive and strict constructionism—hesitated over constitutional scruples. In Congress, he was opposed by Federalists who sought to weaken his administration by questioning the legality and wisdom of a president's annexing a "vast wilderness unpeopled with any beings except wolves and wandering Indians." He pressed on, though, convinced of the vital interest served by preventing a foreign power from occupying the nation's western edge and seduced by the opportunity to extend an "empire of liberty" halfway across the continent.

In the eyes of many Congressmen in 1803—and, as Sublette rightly argues, in the eyes of history as well—acquiring Louisiana was equaled in importance by the decision to allow slavery on its soil. Reopening a question that had embroiled the nation from its founding—and whose nonresolution made a dent in the federal idea, slavery begging national consensus rather than sectional understanding—abolitionists pointed to the incommensurability of human bondage with republican ideals; Northern Congressmen, hostile to slavery or not, were determined to prevent the expansion of the "slave power" (the favored term for the notorious "three-fifths clause" of the Constitution, which granted slaveholding states extra electoral votes in proportion to three-fifths of their black populace, and upon which those states had insisted as a condition of joining the Union). In the end, Jefferson and his Congressional allies won out; no provision against slavery's spread was included in the final bill of annexation. The tensions thereby exacerbated, however, would not be resolved until the Civil War.

Though Jefferson viewed slavery as a "hideous evil" and believed its eventual extinguishment on American soil was desirable and inevitable, he was equally convinced that freed blacks could never live peaceably alongside whites; mass emancipation would have to be accompanied by mass repatriation to Africa or the West Indies. "We have the wolf by the ears," went his famous summation of the issue, "and we can neither hold him nor safely let him go." In declining to limit slavery in lower Louisiana, he privately argued that his treaty with France entailed respecting the "property rights" of existing residents, and also that "diffusing" the Chesapeake's dense concentration of Negroes into the new Southwest might lessen slavery's intensity, thereby hastening its demise. Less grandly, he hoped it might lessen the likelihood of Haiti-style conflagration in Virginia.

Sublette, for his part, argues that slavery's spread was "not an unintended consequence of territorial expansion but…devoutly desired by Jefferson's constituents." While this is certainly so, Sublette errs in placing slavery's spread near the core of Jefferson's aims in Louisiana, offering a caricatured portrait of Jefferson's venality and racism that does little to illuminate his actions in the context of his time. One of course empathizes with the aim to examine Jefferson "from the perspective of slavery"; in recent years, especially since the 1998 DNA study that all but proved Jefferson fathered children with his slave Sally Hemings, his hypocrisies have become well publicized. Yet depicting Jefferson as little more than a stooge for Southern interests is to simplify considerably. For one thing, his "diffusionist" stance had many Northern supporters. Moreover, his approach to Louisiana was governed, above all, by concerns of national security and expansion; his silence on slavery as president—however detestable—came from his reasoned belief that neither the Union nor his political career could survive federal intervention on the question of how and when the states should end the "peculiar institution" (all facts that, in any event, bolster rather than weaken arguments about slavery's intrinsic role in the political economy of the early Republic).

Flaws of historiography aside, Sublette's emphasis on what the Louisiana Purchase meant for the rise of a domestic slave trade is beyond debate. That trade, as detailed in crucial recent books by historians Walter Johnson (*Soul by Soul*, 1999) and Adam Rothman (*Slave Country*, 2005), enabled the spread of a Cotton Kingdom throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, accompanying the growth of America's slave population during the first half of the nineteenth century from 900,000 to nearly 4 million. The forced migration of hundreds of thousands of blacks, marched south from the Chesapeake in coffles or sailed south in boats around Florida to New Orleans, not only afforded the development of a society based on slave labor but made the value represented in slaves its essential form of capital. By the 1830s, Virginia field hands were fetching upward of $1,000 at market in New Orleans; light-skinned "fancy girls" as much as $7,000. Bought and borrowed against, mortgaged and sold, Negro slaves came to be seen as investments more secure even than land; their estimated cash value by 1860 (some $4 billion) would equal seven times

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the total US currency then in circulation.

It would be an overreach to suggest that such profits were foreseen by Jefferson's constituents and served as a key motive for the Purchase. That said, in 1804 Virginia's planters certainly knew that they stood to gain from sending surplus Negroes to market down south. And soon, a ban on importing new Africans guaranteed their share. On January 1, 1808, the trans-shipment of slaves from abroad to US ports was made a federal crime, thereby outlawing a traffic that, wrote Jefferson, "the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country have long been eager to proscribe." As so often before and after, Jefferson's moralizing belied its effect; ending the import trade spurred the homegrown one. This likely explains why the ban's 200th anniversary this year—as opposed to its widely commemorated British analogue in 2007—has been allowed to pass largely unnoticed. While the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 resulted from a popular movement of Quakers and others morally opposed to slavery, the American ban served to protect a domestic industry in buying and selling people—an industry of which New Orleans remained the vital center until the Civil War.

When New Orleans became a part of the United States, its acquisition made the inchoate Republic an imperial nation on the world stage. In the two centuries since—from the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, where the new Republic's old colonial master was defeated for a final time; to the Civil War; to Reconstruction, Jim Crow, civil rights and Katrina—the city has time and again been the site for some of our most dramatic reckonings with who we are as a nation. Once the largest city in the Confederacy, New Orleans has long depended on federal largesse: first a hundred miles upriver, where the immense works of the Army Corps of Engineers at Atchafalaya keep the Mississippi from changing course and not flowing past New Orleans at all; and second, at the edge of the city itself, where the Corps' levees are meant to keep this sinking metropolis from filling with water—a task, as the world knows, at which it tragically failed on August 29, 2005.

The traumas born of that day were in the first place personal, and counted in the thousands. For the larger community of New Orleans and its astonishing culture, however, the collective tragedy has been that so many of those scattered by the storm were the human carriers of that culture's stories, traditions and symbols. Not everyone, though, has left, and in a vivid coda to his narrative, Sublette offers a tableau of some who have stayed. On a cool Mardi Gras morning in February 2006, in St. Augustine's Church, the oldest black Catholic congregation in the country, he describes a krewe of Mardi Gras Indians—black men who, as has been the practice since the 1800s, don elaborately fashioned costumes whose beads and colors recall Africa but that are made to resemble the feathered headdresses of Sioux warrior fame (partly in homage, it is said, to the more proximate tribes with whom runaway slaves found refuge in Louisiana's swamps). "I'm the Big Chief of the Congo Nation!" bellows musician and krewe leader Donald Harrison Jr., just returned from months living in a Baton Rouge motel, as he leads his troupe, Congo Nation, from the church. "And on Mardi Gras Day I cause the sensation!" When Congo Nation encounters a rival krewe on the street, its refrain, like that of all the Indians, is, "We won't bow down"—an ethos in which Sublette hears New Orleans's refusal to cooperate in its own erasure, its people continuing still to "rock the city with their Congo dances."

And yet what is important about this city, and about such "only in New Orleans" traditions as the Mardi Gras Indians, is not merely what they recall from the past—be that

CUNY The Murphy Institute

ANNOUNCING

A New Master's Degree Program
in Labor Studies

For individuals who want to develop their leadership skills and advance their careers in unions, government, non-profit organizations and the private sector

at

The Murphy Institute
CUNY School of Professional Studies
25 West 43rd Street,18th floor
New York, New York 10036

Visit our websites for more information
www.WorkerEd.org
www.sps.cuny.edu

For an application packet or to speak with an advisor,
call 212-827-0200

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IS CUNY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

past Kongo, French, Spanish, Houma or Haitian—but what makes them quintessentially American: as living stories about how people from those cultures and their descendants have reconciled themselves to this place, and to one another, to make something new. In the history of New Orleans—where in key ways the American empire was born and where, in the ongoing disaster since Katrina, many have seen a marker of its current fall—lies in microcosm a tale about the entire New World. It remains a test of our nation, and of a new administration in Washington, to make New Orleans anew once more. ■

FBI, RECORD GROUP 65, NATIONAL ARCHIVES

An FBI simulation of Patty Hearst in various wigs, summer 1974

That Girl

by RICK PERLSTEIN

Patty's Got a Gun
Patricia Hearst in 1970s America.
By William Graebner.
Chicago. 218 pp. $20.

The story of the hostage who comes by turns to identify with the captor is one of the oldest ever told. Tales of unsullied Puritan maidens kidnapped by Indians only to end up "going native" were staples of early American literature. *The Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, which describes the ordeal of a minister's wife held for eleven weeks by Narragansett Indians during King Philip's War in 1676, was among the first such narratives, and it was enormously popular when it was published in Boston in 1682. Three hundred years later, a similar story seized the West's imagination: in Stockholm in 1973, after four customers were taken hostage in a holdup of the Sveriges Kreditbank, there were reports that one of them became affianced to one of the bank robbers. The archetype is of such sturdy provenance, in fact, that it surprised me to learn from William Graebner's *Patty's Got a Gun* that it wasn't until six years after the Kreditbank incident that the term "Stockholm syndrome" appeared in the American mass media. The phrase first surfaced in 1979, Graebner explains, "when *Time* magazine suggested that the syndrome might have taken hold among those being held hostage by Iranian militants in Tehran." Perhaps the obsession with the notion of a loss of self under conditions of duress is so primal, so elemental of modern anxieties, that people feared to give it a proper name. Until, that is, the 1970s—a time so drenched in the detritus of captivity that the culture suddenly could not do without the shorthand.

The captivity narrative at the center of Graebner's book is the 1974 kidnapping of a modest and nondescript California heiress by a murderous ultra-left cult that called itself the Symbionese Liberation Army. A stranger story has hardly ever been told. Months after her kidnapping, Patty Hearst appeared on surveillance footage of a bank robbery brandishing an M-1 machine gun. Ten days later the SLA would release tapes of her calling her parents pigs and insisting that if she had been brainwashed, it was only via "the process whereby the people are conditioned to passively take their place in society as slaves of the ruling class." When the police torched an SLA safe house with most of the group still inside, Patty watched it on live TV from a motel near Disneyland with the rest of her SLA "combat unit." Thus began a flight during which, apparently as a full-fledged member of the gang, she never once tried to escape for more than a year. Then came her trial in 1976 for armed robbery, in which celebrity attorney F. Lee Bailey tried and failed to convince a jury that Hearst bore no responsibility for her crime because she had been brainwashed.

Stockholm syndrome was everywhere in the 1970s. Hearst's case was but the most notorious. The "brainwashing" of soul-searching youth by religious cults became the paramount obsession of the middle class (in Sunday school at my Reform temple in Milwaukee, we were trained to resist their wiles). "Between 1969 and 1977," Graebner points out, "more than thirty zombie movies appeared in the United States and in other countries." The most notorious of them all, *Dawn of the Dead*, came out in 1978—the same year that a remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* dramatized a "fear that human beings are vulnerable creatures, rather easily drained of the basic qualities of humanness," in this case by aliens who arrive in the form of lovely flowers that turn the citizens of San Francisco into "a new race, identical in appearance to the old one but, like zombies, lacking emotive qualities." Students of American culture will recognize the signposts of national anxiety: San Francisco, flowers, zombies. "If you're going to San Francisco/Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair," went a 1967 hit song about the "Summer of Love." The Bay Area was a national catchment for lost souls, a symbol of horror for parents who no longer considered their children their own. (Congress was worried enough about the problem to pass a Runaway Youth Act in 1974.) The fact that Hearst was kidnapped in no less a zombie reservoir than Berkeley would be central to the national discussion of her fate.

The SLA's Svengali, small-time crook Donald DeFreeze, recruited from among the upper ranks of the runaways who flocked to Berkeley to "find themselves" amid the ashes of '60s idealism. (SLA comrade Cujo was the son of a Pennsylvania anesthesiologist; Teko had played on the golf team at his Indiana high school.) Charles Manson had been a similar kind of pied piper seven years earlier in Haight-Ashbury. "In Berkeley, a city symbolic of personal and political change," Graebner writes, "being an urban guerrilla was a lifestyle option." The SLA lived that lifestyle to the hilt. (Its slogan: "Death to the Fascist Insect That Preys Upon the Life of the People.") Three months before the Hearst kidnapping, the SLA murdered the school superintendent of Oakland. The "Black Judas in Oakland" had issued student identification cards, which in the fevered logic of the SLA and other factionistas obviously portended fascism.

But the SLA was also implicated in the typical dodges of thug life. The most fascinating witness at Hearst's trial was Ulysses

Rick Perlstein's most recent book is Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hall, who had earlier been in prison with DeFreeze. Shortly after the bank robbery, out of curiosity, Hall rang up DeFreeze to ask him, one hood to another, what his motive was in the impressment of a captive he could have ransomed for millions of dollars. DeFreeze's reported answer provided the clearest insight into the complex admixture of criminal mischief, outright lunacy and genuine revolutionary fervor that drove the man who took as his name Cinque Mtume, after the leader of the Amistad slave rebellion and the Swahili word for "prophet." DeFreeze/Cinque explained that his main concern was the fugitive gang's survival. Ransoming Hearst, or even merely releasing her, would render them more vulnerable to capture. The safe play, DeFreeze told Hall, "was to put her in a position where she would become…a part of the group." Even better if she committed a dastardly crime by their side. Then she would be right there on the hook with them.

The methods by which Hearst was psychologically coerced into identification with the SLA is the most famous part of her story (it's depicted with relative faithfulness to the documentary record in a 1988 film by Paul Schrader). Gagged, blindfolded and bound, the 19-year-old was shunted off, Graebner writes, to a "small, smelly closet (twenty-five by seventy-nine inches), padded but otherwise empty, where she would remain for about six weeks, the first two weeks blindfolded, the first few days without access to a toilet." She thought she was being buried alive; earlier, from the other side of the door, the barked explanation had emerged from "General Field Marshall" Cinque: she was a "prisoner of war" of a massive and widely dispersed army and would be killed if she tried to escape, beaten or dangled from the ceiling if she made any noise. For the next two days she was hectored about the organization's worldview; on day three interrogators began lecturing her about the "crimes that her mother and father have committed against we the American people and the oppressed people of the world."

Her captors also sexually assaulted her. "I mostly thought that I would be killed," she later testified. That nicely served Cinque's purposes. Soon the voices coming through the closet door were telling her that she was likely to be killed in a police raid. (The police would end up accidentally killing most of the group.) Those who had once been her tormentors would be her protectors. "You can join us and fight with us, or you can die," Cinque eventually offered. "I accommodated my thoughts to coincide with theirs," Hearst wrote in her 1982 memoir *Every Secret Thing*. "I had lived in fear of the SLA for so long now that fear of the FBI came easily to me."

Oliver Twist is a moral map of post–Poor Laws London as Charles Dickens understood it, drawn according to the various characters' reactions to the dazed and abused captive Oliver. The masters of the workhouse see him as inherently criminal, mere exemplar of his indigent class even before he has done anything to judge him by. Fagin, meanwhile, describes a strategy to brainwash the traumatized Oliver different in no particular way from that of the latter-day underground man, Cinque Mtume. First they all but lock Oliver in a closet. Then they let him experience a redemption that they engineer, casting themselves as his protectors against the clutches of the outside world. Then they draft him into their common legal jeopardy, because:

> "Once let him feel that he is one of us; once fill his mind with the idea that he has been a thief; and he's ours! Ours for life. Oho! It couldn't have come about better!" The old man crossed his arms upon his breast; and, drawing his head and shoulders into a heap, literally hugged himself for joy.… "He *must* be in the same boat with us. Never mind how he came there; it's quite enough for my power over him that he was in a robbery; that's all I want."

The prosecution prevailed by branding Patty Hearst a 'rebel in search of a cause.'

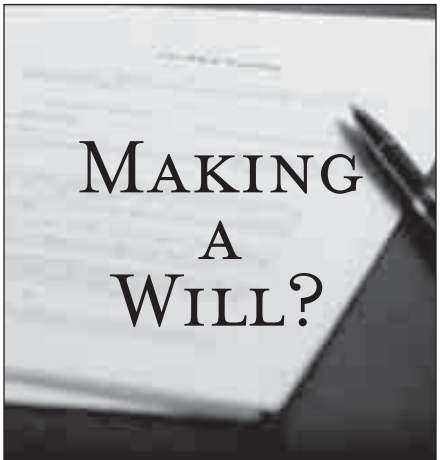
After Oliver is impressed into committing an armed robbery alongside Fagin's gang and is shot during the crime and left behind to die, the servants who rescue him view his mere participation in the crime as sufficient to convict him, his soul manifested in his bare acts alone. Dickens's heroes, meanwhile, are liberals who intently probe the circumstances that make Oliver not so much a moral agent as a victim. ("Surely the poor child's story," the saintly Rose intones, "will be sufficient to exonerate him.")

Free will or coercion? Guilty or innocent? Admit to how you would judge Oliver, and Dickens will tell you who you are—and, from the coordinates that result, plot the shape of an entire social world. Graebner's methodology in *Patty's Got a Gun* is similar. The heart of the study treats Hearst's trial as a public argument about what it meant, and to whom, to be said to possess an autonomous "self" in America around 1973–76: if an "autonomous" self could be said to exist at all. "Was there something extraordinary in Patty's background or makeup that could explain the variety of roles she had taken on in so short a time?" Graebner writes. "Or was this protean Patty a sort of mirror image of the ordinary Patty? And, if that were true, were all ordinary people vulnerable, or open, to such dramatic transformations?" In mid-'70s America, you could not answer the question without taking a side in the country's emergent culture war.

The prosecution, attempting to convict Hearst as a voluntary revolutionary, drafted off the opinions of conservative editorialists processing the traumas of the 1960s. She was fit progeny, as one Midwestern paper put it, of "Mansonettes, seeking flower-child summers but finding themselves as mass murderers.… Political rabbit holes from which fallen PhD candidates emerge as Weathermen. Pitiful bands of Jesus freaks, lost on behalf of a God who must cry for the waste." "Liberals in Congress" were blamed, and "today's climate of permissiveness," and "a generation of youth worship, permissive parenthood, and soft-headed justice." Hadn't we always warned it would end up like this? Others blamed Berkeley itself: "Fungus thrives in human warmth. Perhaps violence thrives in the vacuum of permissiveness that exists on some campuses these days." Class was never far from these sorts of backlash arguments: that what one paper called "Mrs. Hearst's little darling," what another called a "rebellious miscreant," was a "spoiled rich kid."

The argument proceeded in blithe innocence of facts: actually, Hearst's parents were quite strict; she lived modestly; worked in a department store for pocket money; and was utterly apolitical, with hardly the imagination for rebellion. ("Venice is nice, but smelly," she wrote to her boyfriend during her dutiful high school trip abroad. "The only thing in the world she wanted then," her boyfriend wrote in his memoir, "was to have two kids, a collie, and a station wagon.") The argument succeeded with the jury nonetheless, Graebner says. The prosecution, after carefully but risibly establishing an insurrectionist streak in her "unparalleled" "capacity for sarcasm" and such childhood acts as "telling a nun to go to Hell," won the case, he thinks, when a lawyer stumbled into the formulation that she was a "rebel in search of a cause." It was but a short step, went the logic, to the tapes she made proclaiming she would never "choose to live the rest of my life surrounded by pigs like the Hearsts," and from there, to outright criminality. (*Anyone's Daughter* was the title of a popular book on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



MAKING A WILL?

It's important for you. And important for us that you consider making *The Nation* part of your legacy. By making a provision for *The Nation* now, you help ensure that both the principles we stand for, and the forum in which we fight for them, will be around for generations to come. Your legacy can take the form of a will, a trust, or various other means. It can go to *The Nation* or to The Nation Institute, a tax – exempt charitable organization. And of course it can be – and will be appreciated – in whatever amount you can make it, large or small. It's spelled out in what we call our Legacy Group brochure. If you're at an estate-planning point in your life, or feel you'd like to know more about your options in general, call us for a copy.

THE NATION LEGACY GROUP
(212) 209-5428

The Nation.
33 IRVING PLACE
NEW YORK, NY 10003-2332

Call today to receive our new Memorial and Honorary gift package.

the trial; "Could Your Daughter Kill?" was a *Los Angeles* magazine story on the Manson trial of 1970.)

Bailey made a bold and unprecedented case for exoneration. His opening statement, in Graebner's paraphrase, called Hearst "a creature lacking in will, no longer in control of her actions: a victim." ("Surely the poor child's story," he may well have said, "will be sufficient to exonerate her.") Bailey's strategy was to call a series of expert witnesses who would guide the jury through the state-of-the-art thinking about "coercive persuasion," popularly known as "brainwashing," and compare Patty with its most famous victims. During the Korean War, "forceful interrogation" by Chinese captors induced "compliant behavior" in 60 percent of American prisoners of war, according to studies by one expert witness called by the defense. In 1948 the Hungarian Cardinal József Mindszenty was arrested, stripped naked in public, made to wear a clown outfit, treated to a month of beatings, druggings and episodes of sleep deprivation, then "confessed" to enormous anti-Communist crimes (his memoirs were published around the time of Hearst's kidnapping). One defense psychiatrist even called Hearst's pallid affect during the trial—a courtroom reporter labeled it "zombielike"—the "Mindszenty look."

It was hogwash, argued the prosecution, these silly softies who thought of criminal defendants as patients "requiring therapy." The government prosecutor later told a reporter "that Patty had used victimhood to mask the most exhilarating experience of her life"; a prosecution psychiatrist said that Patty, no patsy she, was no less than the "queen" of the SLA. During one part of the trial, they resorted to the epistemology of Victorian workhouse overseers: we must judge the drifting, feckless hippie children of the rich by what they essentially are. During another phase, they chose a Victorian epistemology of blunt literalism: look at what Patty Hearst did, what she said, what she chose (she picked up a gun—so how could she have intended anything but to pick up a gun?). Negotiating this swirl of significations, Graebner proposes, the trial became a public referendum on the very questions of free will and determinism, of the mutability of the self, of the nature of individual responsibility.

These were the questions, he demonstrates, that everyone was asking in the 1970s. Some will find certain of his examples too tendentious (Cindy Sherman's photo series *Complete Untitled Film Stills* felt that way to me); but some will find them quite brilliant and convincing. Consider the intellectuals: the '70s was the time when social thinkers and their students became increasingly conversant, and comfortable, with the idea that the ego was not master of its own house. Althusser, Foucault, Debord, Derrida and Robert Jay Lifton, one of Bailey's expert witnesses: all, in various ways and to various degrees, were dealing with the notion of the self not as a sovereign but as a subject, yoked to deterministic forces that made individual will seem more and more a fiction. We were all—were we not—victims of brainwashings of our own. "The understanding of addiction as a disease remained prevalent into the 1970s," Graebner points out in one of his fugues on the trial's relationship to its cultural context, "but by 1980 addicts were increasingly being held personally responsible for their plight, and 'she could even be you'"—the slogan of a popular anti-Valium campaign—"had morphed into Nancy Reagan's 'just say no.'"

By the time of his closing statement, Bailey realized that the trial was not going his way—that his expert witnesses, with all their nuanced questions about who, after all, could be said to possess a "true" self, were utterly falling flat. Abruptly, Bailey shifted tack. He pleaded with the jury, "I am not really a flaming liberal" and admitted that he, too, had been angry at Hearst when she called her parents pigs. He began arguing in the same Perry Mason just-the-facts mode as the prosecution. He "revealed," Graebner concludes, "a great concern: that he might be arguing his case to the silent majority." And so he was. One juror, reflecting on the decision to convict, noted that Hearst's postcaptivity interest in radical feminist tracts like Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, which she read under the SLA's sway during her captivity, was "more important than some things" in arriving at the verdict. The jury considered the intellectuals and their insistence on the limits of free will, and blanched; speaking for American culture as a whole, the jurors had tired of elite discourse's flirtation with the complexities of the protean, overdetermined self. Our national cult of self-made identities triumphed. Enough with the fashionable nonsense about vulnerable selves: people mean precisely what they say and do precisely what they intend to do.

The summer after Hearst's trial, *Star Wars* was released and immediately became a pop sensation. America now preferred its captives to be self-willed self-rescuers. *Rambo* would soon grace movie screens; Ronald Reagan would soon be president. And Patty Hearst would go to jail, a harbinger of our new age of "personal responsibility." What was a captive supposed to do? The jury decided: she was supposed to just say no. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BACK TALK

ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

Thelma Golden

Thelma Golden has been the director of the Studio Museum in Harlem since 2005 and a curator there since 2000. This year, the museum—founded as an institution devoted to African-American art and artifacts of the African diaspora—celebrated its fortieth anniversary. The museum is featuring a retrospective on the photo-realist painter Barkley Hendricks, who showed early works there in the 1980s. —*Christine Smallwood*

In 1994 you curated an exhibition at the Whitney called "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." Have the concerns of black artists shifted away from identity politics in the past fifteen years?

Identity politics is a problematic catchword. All work in some ways is involved in identity politics—the question is just what is chosen to be centralized and becomes labeled as such, and what then is marginalized and then becomes labeled as such. Thinking about race and gender and identity has shifted, but that's because the world has shifted. It's not a shift specific to black artists. The way in which artists work in any particular moment is contextual. An African-American artist working in 1968 was working in a different context than 2008.

What are your favorite pieces in the collection?

I don't have favorites in the collection. I know that sounds like a dodge. There are about 2,000 objects in our collection that have come through gifts as well as purchase. The strength of our collection is the way in which it really tells a story of the nature of the collecting and the presenting of African-American art by artists of African descent. A lot of gifts in our collection came from the very people who first championed the work of African-American artists. Also, a lot of our collection reflects our exhibition history, so that in many cases there were artists that the Studio Museum really championed and showed first. Now some of those artists are collected widely.

Has the museum been impacted by gentrification in Harlem?

I don't think we have changed in response to the gentrification, but I do think the community has changed, and we have been part of the change happening in the community. The idea of starting a museum in Harlem in 1968 to many people seemed like a very farfetched idea. Those founders of the museum not only had a vision for Harlem in the future but had a vision that this institution was necessary and should be in Harlem. The Harlem community has been getting more diverse, not necessarily in the way that you read about, but in subtler ways. For example, there are many people who are not American who've moved to Harlem, who are Europeans, Asians, who move to New York, more to Harlem, and their sense of Harlem is from abroad, from afar. And they're deeply invested in knowing the history. And then there are longtime residents who have been our visitors from the day we opened and continue to be our visitors. That is gratifying as well, in some way, to be a neighborhood museum.

You sometimes read about the shortened cycle of careers for artists today, about MFA graduates moving to galleries, blowing up and then fading out. What do you think about that cycle?

I think now *life* is faster generally, so that this kind of faster cycle of artists being MFA students to graduating and showing is just a reflection of how completely speed dominates existence right now. On the other hand, I just went last night to the opening of Mary Heilmann at the New Museum. There is nothing like seeing a mature artist who, over their career, has had a chance to develop a strong voice. Now careers can be very short. But I look around at other forms of culture, and I see that as well. I think about that in music and bemoan it a little, and I think about it in acting and the film world—this idea of people whose careers are one big flash and then slowly burn out. And it is unfortunate, but again I am perhaps an optimist and perhaps somewhat naïve, because at heart I am really a curator. So I am not willing to cut myself off from artworks and artists at any point in their career.

How many nights a week are you out, looking at art?

I am generally out five nights a week. Monday to Friday.

How has the way that people interact with art changed in your lifetime?

I've read all the studies that say people are moving through museums really fast. I certainly see people who come in and have a typical museum visit—walk around, look at each thing, read labels. But I've also had the experience of people who come back over and over again to look at one thing or a particular exhibit. When I was a high school student in New York City, I took some of the arts education classes for high school students at the Metropolitan Museum. I had an amazing teacher, who is an artist, named Randy Williams. There were times he'd make us spend the whole class looking at one work of art, really carefully, really deeply, really systematically: top to bottom, side to side. Other times he'd make us walk through galleries, not really stopping, and take in things. Now when I look back, it felt like performance art sometimes: all of us looking at one thing or following him in a line. He wanted us to see how our own eye worked and to train our eye. Everyone experiences art differently, and what Randy taught us is that artworks also demand from us a certain kind of ability in order to fully understand them. When I go to the Met there are still works I'm drawn to from the time I went with Randy. That's what he was trying to teach us: that artworks try to speak to us, instead of us trying to control them. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIGHTING THE CLASS WAR?

Listen to Building Bridges:
Your Community & Labor Report

Produced by Mimi Rosenberg and Ken Nash

WBAI Radio, 99.5 FM, Mondays 7-8 pm (EST)

Streamed, archived & podcast at
www.BuildingBridgesRadio.org

Cat Lovers Against the Bomb

2009 Wall Calendar

$8.95 US/Canada
+ $1.75 postage

Published by Nebraskans for Peace

Order from: CLAB NATION
P.O. Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501
Toll free: (877) 778-3434 • fax: (402) 483-4108
e-mail: catcal@aol.com

SHEROES WOMYN WARRIORS CALENDAR 2009!
365+ rebels, radicals, transgressors, all times/places.
See www.sheroescalendar.org, or send $18. to "Myers Center/Simmons," 300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115.

PEACE

"MULTIPLY PEACE" t-shirt #8144 and mug #2631

Products for Progressives since 1979.
Northern Sun Merchandising
T-SHIRTS • BUMPERSTICKERS • BUTTONS • CUSTOM PRINTING
CALL FOR A NEW! FREE SPRING CATALOG
800.258.8579 xTN • WWW.NORTHERNSUN.COM

Pixies, Sheilas, Dirtbags and Cougar Bait

by CALEB CRAIN

Stone the Crows
Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang.
Edited by John Ayto and John Simpson.
Oxford. 408 pp. $18.95.

The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English
Edited by Tom Dalzell.
Routledge. 1,104 pp. $49.95.

Like poetry and pornography, slang is easier to recognize than to define. Most of it is disapproved of by someone, but obscenity alone doesn't qualify. It isn't slang, for example, to refer to manure with a four-letter word. But if you put the article "the" in front of that four-letter word and equate the president-elect of the United States to it, then slang it is, and very complimentary. Further complicating matters, a great deal of slang is completely inoffensive. Journalists call the first sentence of an article the lede, the last the kicker, the motive for reading it the hook and the paragraph that encapsulates its argument the nut graf—terms that might puzzle an outsider but won't scandalize anyone.

One comes a little closer to a definition of slang by thinking about context. Dirty words suggest that the audience is no better than the speaker, and vice versa. Slang, on the other hand, usually suggests that speaker and audience share membership in a group. A prostitute who describes a slow-to-satisfaction customer as a thirty-three, thereby analogizing him to the standard speed for long-playing vinyl records, is probably not speaking to a police officer. A gay man who describes a lover with a similar quirk as long-winded is probably not speaking to a heterosexual. The implied identifications are flexible, however. If a gay hairdresser in London offers to zhoosh you, it's safe to accept his titivation even if you're a straight man. The word might make you blush, but it won't compromise your orientation; it merely dignifies you with honorary membership in the group of people who understand how he talks.

Sometimes a slang word or phrase springs free of the people who coined it, but it remains slang only for as long as it trails groupiness of some kind, however attenuated or abstract. You needn't work for the sanitation department to call maggots disco rice, a term recorded by the *New York Times* in July 2004, but the term nonetheless implies that a vivid acquaintance with the larvae was picked up somewhere. In September, when a writer for *New York* magazine hailed Sarah Palin's promised son-in-law for attracting "the cougar vote," the writer probably didn't intend to signal that he and his readers belonged to the romantic community that unites older women and younger men. But he probably did expect that he and his readers shared an urbane taste for following pop-culture reportage on sexual behavior into its sillier vicissitudes.

To a lexicographer, slang's abundance may present an even greater challenge than its definition. Although humans coin words as prolifically as bees make honey, dictionaries of standard English only include lexemes that have become a stable currency among strangers. Slang is not confined by this useful limit. My boyfriend and I refer to going online as checking our bids, in memory of a bygone fascination with eBay. Because we once elaborated the no-chicken label on a box of vegetarian broth into a fowl-friendly warning—"No, no, chicken! Keep away from the boiling water!"—we now always call the broth no-no chicken. The glossy young rich who crowd us out of our favorite restaurants are known to us as kittenheads, on account of a bus-side ad I once saw that juxtaposed an enormous fluffy white feline head, a crystal goblet full of glistening diced organ meats and the slogan "Next Stop, Uptown." This is just the tip of the iceberg of our private slang, and we're only two people. Multiply our sample by all the groups, large and small, who improvise with the English language for their own convenience and pleasure, and you see the problem. Slang is virtually infinite. It helps to exclude slang that hasn't been published, but in the Internet age it doesn't help much.

To steer successfully between the normal and the too-peculiar, a slang dictionary must be an exercise in tact as well as linguistics. As a result, it's likely to evince personality. *Stone the Crows*, the second edition of Oxford University Press's dictionary of modern slang, is eccentric and risqué, like a well-read, inter-

Caleb Crain has written for The New Yorker, *the* London Review of Books *and* The New York Review of Books.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mittently potty-mouthed uncle. The charms of *The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English*, on the other hand, are somewhat coarser, and bring to mind a younger brother with troubled friends who has memorized long stretches of dialogue from movies starring stoners or mobsters. To explain the word "fairy," the Oxford quotes Evelyn Waugh. To explain "dirtbag," the Routledge quotes *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. It isn't quite fair to compare the two, because the Oxford collects English-language slang in use anywhere (but predominantly in Britain) since World War I and the Routledge restricts itself to America since World War II. Accordingly, the Oxford features "Joe Bloggs" (an average fellow) and "Joe Soap" (a gull), while the Routledge has "Joe Sixpack" (a blue-collar type), "Joe Schmo" (a representative dimwit) and "Joe Cool" (someone who aspires to the sangfroid of Snoopy in sunglasses). But the difference in catchment areas cannot alone explain how little overlap there is. The Oxford claims that the Swiss itch, a style of tequila drinking that involves licking salt beforehand and sucking lime afterward, is American and dates from 1959, but the Routledge doesn't know about it. The words "love apple," "ladies' aid" and "joybox" look naughty but have innocent meanings, a contrast that might be expected to appeal to the Oxford's whimsical spirit; but only the Routledge reveals that they refer to a tomato, a pool-cue support and a piano, respectively.

And that's as it should be. There's more slang in the world than dictionaries can capture, and there's no reason for them to repeat one another's labor. Absent from both the Oxford and the Routledge, for example, are "lede," "hook" in its journalistic sense (unless you count the seventeenth meaning given by Routledge: "in a confidence swindle, the stage in the swindle when the victim is fully committed to the scheme"), "nut graf," "disco rice," "cougar" and "kittenhead." (I ought to confess, though, that the Oxford taught me "zhoosh," and the Routledge "thirty-three" and "long-winded.") It is easy and uncharitable to prolong such a list, but I'm unable to resist adding that neither dictionary mentions "beemo," the mildly pejorative word for a zealous student that haunted my 1970s childhood in central Massachusetts; "gaybait," a generalized taunt from the same milieu, whose literal meaning occurred to none of us there, I'm fairly sure; "demap," a synonym for kill coined by David Foster Wallace in *Infinite Jest*; "muzzleloader," gay slang for someone who shares what is said to have been Alfred Kinsey's chief sexual perversion and which means what you think it means; "sketchy," an adjective that I overheard on the subway just last night in reference to a potentially dangerous situation; or "money quote," a piece of blogger's cant patterned after a term of art in the porn industry and used to introduce a crucial excerpt—the nut graf as seen from the other side of the table. Both dictionaries dip into Internet slang—the Routledge knows what it means for a McCain adviser to complain that Sarah Palin didn't have the "bandwidth" to prepare for her media interviews, and the Oxford is down with "warez" as a synonym for pirated software or media—but neither mentions the new Internet-accelerated interjections "meh" ("I am unimpressed") or "teh" ("I am emphasizing and ironizing simultaneously by deliberately mistyping the word 'the,'" often used in conjunction with the spurious plural "Internets," which was pioneered by George W. Bush during the 2004 presidential debates).

Yet these dictionaries contain riches. As one sifts them, one may even be led to imagine that they reveal our deepest preoccupations. People used to spend themselves in sexual climax; later they came, and I've long wondered what shifted the metaphorics underlying the highest human pleasure from commerce to presence. Nowadays people merely cum, as if the very spelling of the word rebelled against anything so grand as immanence and insisted that the act was no more than physiological. As research for further such speculations, I tried for a while to keep score while reading the Routledge—toting up the dingle-dangles, meat whistles, one-eyes and jing-jangs to

Poem Including History

A curb the color
of nausea.
Parking lot gravel
splintered with glass,
dog shit, receipts.
Storage sheds—a row
of lamp-lit doors
deepening
as dusk thickens. Now,
night, they're all that's left
and traffic's
excuse for music
moving through the room.

JOSEPH MASSEY

The Greatest Event in History is Now Unfolding...

A group of enlightened teachers, the ancient guardians of the human race, have emerged from their retreats to work openly among us. These Masters of Wisdom, led by Maitreya the World Teacher, are here *now* to inspire a great planetary transformation based on sharing, justice and restoration of the environment.

...What part will *you* play?

TheEmergence.org/nm • 888-242-8272

PROGRESSIVE ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

INSIGHT IN A 20 MINUTE READ WITH THE SOLUTION TO OUR FINANCIAL CRISIS

WWW.ECONOMICSFORDEMOCRATS.COM

WWW.THENATIONMART.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Events

INTERNATIONAL

Curious About Third World Issues?

■ Visit Nicaragua as part of a delegation observing rural and urban projects— healthcare, education and sustainable farming. Meet community leaders and development workers. See how the World Bank and the IMF affect the lives of poor and working-class. Travel: February 21–28. Cost: $995; includes ground transportation, accommodations, meals and lodging, experienced guide, air-conditioned van and translation. Limit: eight people. To benefit Hagar Luceros del Amanecer, a project for at-risk children in Camoapa, Nicaragua. Sponsored by The Sunrise Foundation, PO Box 210, Williamsburg, MA 01096. Hogarlda@yahoo.com.

NATIONAL

Economy Connection

■ War and global capitalism. Unemployment and recession. Wealth, poverty and inequality. Economy Connection, a project of the Union for Radical Political Economics, can provide speakers on these and related topics for formal or informal events sponsored by community groups, unions, high schools, colleges or political organizations. Contact us at (201) 792-7459 or soapbox@comcast.net.

What Is Democracy?

■ Documentarians Sílvia Leindecker and Michael Fox present the US screening of *Beyond Elections: Redefining Democracy in the Americas*. In 1989 the Brazilian Worker's Party altered the concept of local government, and from there democracy has begun to flow to this year's historic US election. Interviews with Eduardo Galeano, Amy Goodman, Emir Sader, Martha Harnecker, Ward Churchill, Leonardo Avritzer and others engaged in the grassroots struggle. Screenings: Washington; Philadelphia; New York City; New Paltz, New York; Amherst, Massachusetts; and Boston. Dates & info: www.beyondelections.com.

NEW YORK

Write Obama Now

■ Physicians for a National Health Program (NY Metro Chapter) urges you to write President-elect Obama on HR 676. Ask him to support this plan for a universal, comprehensive, single-payer healthcare system of high-quality national health insurance for the entire nation—in order to eliminate disparate treatment between richer and poorer Americans. Be heard! Use the link at www.pnhpnymetro.org to demonstrate support for HR 676 by December 15. And there's a great way to spread some cheer and inform others about this issue that is so vital to every citizen's care. With the end-of-year holidays and stocking-stuffing time nearly here, consider giving the primer on single-payer—10 Excellent Reasons for National Health Care—to those you truly care about. It, too, is available at www.pnhpnymetro.org.

To place an ad, call Leigh at (212) 209-5414.

see whether they outnumbered or were outnumbered by the maw-maws, chi-chis, dubbies and jigglies—but in the end I despaired. My psychoanalysis is therefore no more than impressionistic.

It nonetheless seems to me that the American id, viewed through the lens of slang, dwells much on human worthlessness, failure, drug addiction, homosexuality (imagined as a come-down, not a turn-on), oral sex, penises and breasts—as if the nation collectively feared that it might be sucking hind tit (suffering deprivation on account of low status) and were in search of compensation. At the end of *Stone the Crows* there's a very clever subject index where one may see at a glance all the slang for, say, a drinking spree: "on a whizzer; on the bash; on the batter; on the bend; on the piss; on the skite." The collective id of the Commonwealth nations is therefore easier to assess, and my sense is that it highly values intoxication, foolishness, money and cheating. Perhaps these are more complex vices than the American ones, or perhaps the slang of one's own people inevitably becomes monotonous. In any case, I found myself tiring of deep-dicking American macks and the deprecation of knobslobbers, pratt boys and morphodites. But those kiwis and limeys! Those gumsuckers, bananalanders and their corresponding sheilas! They track with one another instead of merely dating, put anchovies on toast and call them whales, shout one another drinks, get squiffy together, go home for a little rumpty-pumpty and complain the next morning that they must have been starkers. It's irresistible, as are the Oxford's usage examples. This 1945 quote from Lawrence Durrell, for instance, illustrates a word for an angry letter: "I was afraid…that you would write me a stinker calling me a peach fed sod." (The peaches are not explained.) I even found strangely compelling this 1970 line from the *Daily Telegraph* that instanced a synonym for addiction: "Hundreds of domestic pets die each year after becoming 'hooked' on slug bait." One almost wants to try some.

The Oxford's etymologies are also entertaining. The affectionate moniker "toots," for example, ultimately derives from "foot," and the Australian put-down "warb" ("an idle, unkempt, or disreputable person"), from the maggot of the warble fly. The Routledge, for its part, excels in its explanatory notes, which give a word's originating or most famous-making context. The entry for "tea-room," for example, follows gay restroom sex from the late nineteenth century through Laud Humphreys's acclaimed 1970 sociological study to the recent travails of Idaho Senator Larry Craig. A note for "gonzo" credits its coining to a friend of Hunter S. Thompson's, and one for "hillbilly heroin" refers to the oxycodone addiction of radio personality Rush Limbaugh. It transpires that "pixie" became celebrated after a reference to the amours of Roy Cohn during the McCarthy hearings.

One of the most amiable kinds of slang is the micro-joke, as in "deep sea fishing" (medical slang for exploratory surgery) or "dorm rot" (college slang for a hickey). The Routledge reports that a gay man who flits from one doomed romance to another is known as a Camille and that ordering Navy recruits to tread water at length is called drown-proofing them. But I think my favorite slang genre, which I hadn't previously realized was populous enough to constitute one, consists of phrases derived from the names of pop-culture figures, remembered and unremembered. The Routledge contributes a few American examples: to pull a Hank Snow is to leave, in allusion to Snow's chart-topping 1950 country song "I'm Movin' On," and a John Wayne is an exaggerated punch. But the British and the Australians are fonder of them, so many more are to be found in the Oxford. A Jimmy Woodser is a drink one drinks alone, named for the Australian poem "Jimmy Wood," about a "solitary Briton" who, according to teh Internets, denounced "shouting" and preferred to "drink his poison—solus—nice and quiet." In drinking or any other endeavor, solitude may be described as being on one's tod, because the last name of the jockey Tod Sloan rhymes with "alone." Indeed, rhymes motivate quite a few. A Captain Cook is a look, a Harry Tate is a nervous state and Britney Spears are beers. More ingeniously, Harriet Lane is canned meat, in memory of a famous murder victim, and Fanny Adams is meat stew for a similar reason. A Kathleen Mavourneen is an interminable prison sentence, evoking the refrain of a song with that title: "It may be for years, it may be for ever." The V-for-victory gesture that Americans associate with Nixon is in Britain called a Harvey Smith, because there a horseman by that name popularized it. "Gordon Bennett" expresses astonishment by its resemblance to "God blind me" and in honor of the scurrilous nineteenth-century newspaper editor James Gordon Bennett, who no doubt deserves to be remembered in his afterlife as an expletive. And if you suspect me of having sucked this review out of my thumb, as a South African friend of mine used to put it, feel free to dismiss it as all my eye and Betty Martin. No idea who she is, but apparently she's been around since the 1780s. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified

While we reserve the right to edit, reject or reclassify any advertisement, The Nation *wishes its readers to know we don't have the facilities to check the promises made by our advertisers, and we have a strong presumption against censoring any advertisement, especially if we disagree with its politics. To advertise, contact leigh@thenation.com or call (212) 209-5414. Mail inquiries to* The Nation *Classified Department, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.*

ANCIENT SECRETS

JOSEPHUS

SCHOLARLY BOOKLET PROVES JESUS NEVER EXISTED! Flavius Josephus (Romans) created fictional Jesus, authored gospels. Amazing but absolutely incontrovertible. Over 40,000 sold in twenty-seven years. Send $10: Abelard-Reuchlin, Box 5652-B, Kent, WA 98064. Details: SASE.

BLOGS/WEB

READ UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS in politics, business, travel. Political blogs, celebrity news, bios, more. www.jonesnyhistory.com; www.famouswelsh.com.

ARTIST/SCULPTOR: www.artfg.com (Wabi-Sabi).

BOOKS

DR. LUMUMBA'S DREAM OF INCEST. A new twist on a touchy subject. (888) 280-7715. Also available at amazon.Com.

DOSTOYEVSKY AND DA VINCI understood that the key to Jesus is in John, the gospel that can humanize him or tragically breed anti-Semitism. morganibarra.com

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE is to live it, and here is how: www.findthepurposeoflife.com; (888) 280-7715.

WIR SIND WENIGE, ABER WIR SIND ALLE. Biografien: 68er-generation in der Schweiz. Available at Amazon.de.

SUPPORT MUSICIANS DURING RECESSION! *Patience Gloria* album available on Amazon and iTunes. We need your support!

ROBB MARKS, BOOKSELLER. www.AtheistDiscountBooks.com, www.ScienceFictionDiscountBooks.com.

FOR SALE: Used and rare bookstore in Charlottesville, Virginia. Prime location, good lease, fourteen years of profitability. Books, antiquarian maps and original prints. order@bluewhalebooks.com.

DONATIONS

WANT TO REALLY CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR ALMA MATER? Buy a class *The Nation* for a semester. If you know a professor who would like to offer free semester-length student subscriptions to her/his students, we'll offer you twelve or sixteen weeks at the lowest prices we charge anywhere. For information write: Classroom Education Program, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

EDUCATION

***THE NATION* ACADEMIC PROGRAMS.** *The Nation* has developed a distinctive series of academic programs and curriculums appropriate for college and advanced high school students. These programs examine a wide variety of political, cultural and social issues from historical and contemporary perspectives. For details about curriculums, to establish classroom access to *The Nation* Digital Archive or to inquire about the ways in which *The Nation* can assist with your scholarly research, please write to Charles Bittner, academic liaison: charles@thenation.com.

STUDY SPANISH IN MANHATTAN! Small, friendly nonprofit school. 12-week evening program begins 1/26/09. Cost $125. Go to www.centronyc.org; send further questions to info@centronyc.org.

GOURMET FOOD

REDUCE YOUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL. Fresh California certified olive oil. www.westcoastproducts.net. Specialty olives and olive oils since 1937. Orland, California.

LIBERAL LIAISONS

If responding to a Nation Box number, send replies to: Nation Box ___ , The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

GREENSINGLES.COM—free photo ads for progressive singles in the environmental, vegetarian and animal rights communities. Searchable listings for friendship, dating, marriage. Since 1985. www.greensingles.com.

FETISHES AND FANTASIES fulfilled. Hot erotic talk with creative, sensuous woman. No limits. Personal, confidential. Call (866) 844-8286.

MATURE, INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION. Erotic, imaginative, independently operated. www.missaria.com. (866) 454-3763.

AURAL EROTICA. Well heeled, well spoken, not always well behaved. Fetish friendly, smart & sexy. (800) 717-LIZZ (5499); ElizabethPaxton.com.

PROUDLY UNDERCONSUMING, except dwarf conifers, cabinetmaking tools, ecotravel, charitable giving and Costa Rica. Equally happy as homebody or ecotraveler. Woman, 60s, seeks gentleman 65+ for travel, hopefully more. USPS address, please. Reply Nation Box 458.

HIPPIE PEACENIK, 60, pot belly/head, political/personal-process perspective. Accessible, attentive, nurturing, needy, communicative, cooperative, cuddly. Into folk&blues, vegetable gardening… Yearns to build beingthereness w/compatible woman, any age. Reply Nation Box 366.

LITERARY SERVICES

MANUSCRIPT CONSULTANT. B.A., Harvard; Ph.D. in English literature, Boston College; former Vassar professor; editor of *Against the Vietnam War* and *Against US Foreign Policy Post 9/11* as well as books from Simon & Schuster, Houghton Mifflin, Knopf. Will edit literary and academic manuscripts and poetry. susannah.robbins@gmail.com. (617) 491-3049.

MERCHANDISE

Talk Back Tees
A treasure trove of T-shirts for liberals
Politics/humor/warped/wisdom/people/pets/culture
talkbacktees.com 800.777.9242

EXPRESS YOURSELF! Stickers, shirts, buttons, emblems and more—www.evolvefish.com. (800) 386-5846 for catalog or to order now.

SUPPORT *THE NATION* AND OUR NATION! Shop online at www.thenationmart.com and exercise subtle and not-so-subtle dissent. Most items are union-made. Great gifts!

MY GOD IS BADDER THAN YOUR GOD! Playing Gods, Board Game of Divine Domination: www.PlayingGods.com.

OBAMA VICTORY POSTER
Features 50 historic front pages. **Just $11.00**
FrontPageObama.com

MERCHANDISE

CAT LOVERS AGAINST THE BOMB 2009 wall calendar $8.95 + $1.75 postage. Cats & peace—what more could you want in a calendar? Order from: CLAB-NC, Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501, or toll free (877) 778-3434, or catcal@aol.com.

SHOOFLYAUDIO.COM. Movable feast for the wee literati. Poems, stories, songs for kids 3-7, on CD or download. Great gifts. (888) 929-9401.

ORGANIZATIONS

BERKELEY, CALIF., *Nation* discussion group. prehend@gmail.com.

ASHEVILLE, NC, *Nation* discussion group forming. Contact mgibney@unca.edu.

BRENTWOOD, CALIF. New *Nation* discussion group forming. We'd like to start meetings soon. Contact ibhernandez2003@yahoo.com.

THE SPOKANE/INLAND NORTHWEST *Nation* discussion group: Gil Murray, (509) 999-4502; Box 293, Cheney, WA 99004; e-mail: gbmurray2@aol.com.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF., *Nation* discussion group meetings are starting up. Please e-mail loisaalbq@yahoo.com.

SAN ANTONIO *Nation* discussion group. Second Mondays, Grady's Bar-B-Q at San Pedro and Jackson Keller. Contact lenwheeler@satx.rr.com for more information.

A NEW *NATION* UTAH YAHOO GROUP has been created at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thenationutah. To join contact Sam Evans, (801) 791-8089 or sameritech@yahoo.com.

POLITICAL ACTION

***NATION* STUDENT OUTREACH:** Attention student activists! If you're involved in organizing a progressive event, lecture or film festival on your campus or in your community and would like to distribute copies of *The Nation*, please let us know by calling (212) 209-5416.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

SOCIAL CHANGE JOBS. Weekly employment bulletin *Changeworks* (v2.0) covers progressive organizations across USA. Free sampling of job listings from latest issues at www.changeworks.org. (866) 276-7201.

STUDY SPANISH IN MANHATTAN! Small, friendly nonprofit school. Twelve-week evening program begins January 26. Cost: $125. Go to www.centronyc.org; send further questions to info@centronyc.org.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

PAUL STEIN, Ph.D. Psychotherapy (Jung's approach), relationship(s). Initial consult no charge. NYC office or phone work. (646) 709-8634.

CHICAGO PSYCHOTHERAPIST, twenty-five years, all issues including depression, anxiety, relationships. From concerns of lawyers, academics and office workers to artists and students. Sliding scale, insurance. Deborah Hellerstein, Ph.D., (312) 409-9516.

REAL ESTATE

SANTA FE. Progressive Realtor® seeks same in clients. Peter Kahn, Santa Fe Properties. (800) 374-2931 toll free. (505) 690-4840 mobile or peter.kahn@santafeproperties.com.

TRAVEL

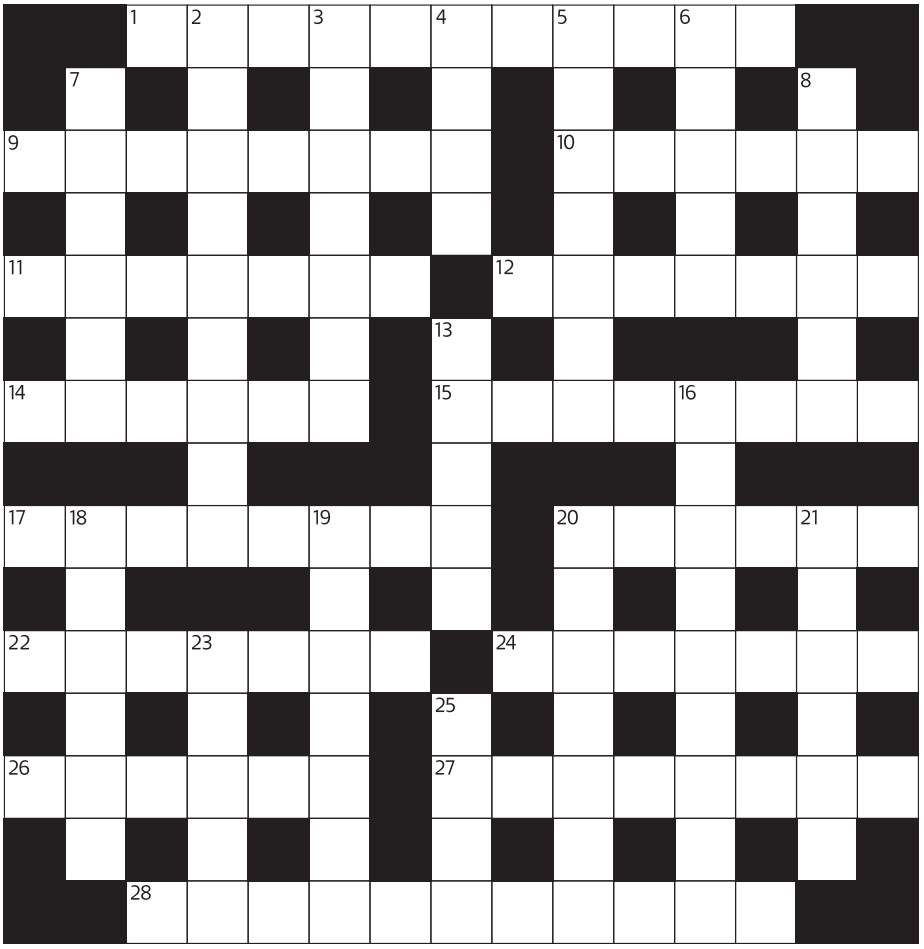
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW EXPERIENCE? Come & visit us. www.WildBurroRescue.org.

CLOTHING-OPTIONAL & NUDE GETAWAYS: tanr.com/tn.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Puzzle No. 3150

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Old magazines that display the things that might make your spine lose all sensation? (4,7)

9 Sounds like an unhappy but old-fashioned miss could be found in the garden. (4-4)

10 and **14** The way we are supposed to stand makes an assertion that we all probably live here. (6,6)

11 A number (a large number) pushes a pencil rather idly. (7)

12 The rhymes we once saw at the side of the road, or the opposite? (7)

14 See 10

15 What the guy in the dell practiced. (8)

17 Not a real mixed up little kid, with a very high voice. (8)

20 Face the way some put it, like the osculating type. (6)

22 Likely to be sort of dead around it, but made it workable somehow. (7)

24 Courage that might be 17 at first, with her top possibly getting a peace sign, and a bit of trouble. (7)

26 Introduce Miss Gardner and Mr. Chaney in Arthur's place. (6)

27 See 4 down

28 With flowing rills on all sides? Fixed to cut down the resistance. (11)

DOWN

2 Possibly Cane's about to lavish attentions on funny stories. (9)

3 Finders, as they say, but they may be in charge. (7)

4 and **27** across One became a beautiful swimmer, though one of those made way for in a book is not the handsome type. (4,8)

5 A real cad? No wonder such is jumpy! ("Peep" doesn't get over here.) (7)

6 and **19** Put in a few more chips! (5,3,4)

7 What the pitcher would hope to get without reservation. (3,3)

8 The plane your uncle ended up with is a real floater. (6)

13 Here you get rings around the heavenly type, with little Harold so well brought up. (5)

16 In Tennessee, a point has wrongly a half-dozen on the rising extension. (9)

18 See 25

19 See 6

20 A capital arrangement for a very early boat wreck, and a letter from Athens. (7)

21 Though ginned poorly, the 4 and 27 had a happy one. (6)

23 The first of a series comprises a ratio over a large number. (5)

25 and **18** Early gardeners with a mad upbringing, as a well as a night out, according to the poet. (4,3,3)

AVAILABLE
from **Nation Books!**
A collection of
Frank W. Lewis
classics!!

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3149

T	O	T	H	E	B	I	T	T	E	R	E	N	D	
I		O		X		N		H		O		E		G
P	O	U	N	C	E	D		E	L	G	R	E	C	O
T		C		E		Y		T		E		D		O
O	N	H	O	L	D		C	H	O	R	T	L	E	D
E		E		S		P		I				E		
I		D	R	I	V	E	I	N		S	I	D	E	S
N				O		R		K		E				A
G	O	W	E	R		S	H	E	R	P	A	S		M
		I				E		R		T		I		A
B	O	L	D	T	Y	P	E		M	E	M	B	E	R
O		I		U		H		S		M		E		I
M	A	E	S	T	R	O		C	A	B	A	R	E	T
B		S		T		N		A		E		I		A
	S	T	R	I	K	E	A	B	A	R	G	A	I	N

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the second week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2008 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149, or call 1-800-333-8536. Publications Mail Agreement No: 40041477. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40612608. When ordering a subscription, please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions. Basic annual subscription price: $52 for 47 issues. Back issues $6 prepaid ($8 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perfect imperfection, the natural raw 2 carat diamond

Ready for some rough stuff? We recently found a rare cache of extremely large uncut diamonds at an extraordinary price.

Sometimes it's impossible to improve on perfection. When the world's most desired stone is pulled from the ground, why not just brush off the earth and leave it alone? White cut diamonds may be nice for a polite kiss on the cheek, but extra large uncut diamonds can really ignite some raw passion. And isn't that what a great piece of jewelry is all about? These few rare 2 carat plus natural stones will certainly turn up your thermostat.

A real diamond in the rough

For centuries, large raw diamonds were treasured without a hint of facet or polish. We believe the early artisans were on to something. After a search through countries on four continents, we have found a cache of rare, very large, 2 carat plus uncut diamonds at a spectacular price from our Belgium dealer. Major gemstone experts across the globe have commented that rough diamonds will be the fastest growing trend on "the red carpet" this year and our long love affair with flawless cut white gemstones may have some competition. All one has to do is flip through the world's most exclusive catalog to find that "rough is all the rage" Our luxury retail friends in Texas recently featured a raw solitaire for $6,000, but they buy in such small quantities that they cannot compete with us on price. You see, Stauer is one of the largest gemstone buyers in the world and last year bought over 3 million carats of emeralds. No regular jewelry store can come anywhere close to that volume.

Similar rough diamonds sell elsewhere for thousands! *Please compare the size and price of our raw diamond in the Stauer Raw Diamond Necklace with those at your local jewelry store.*

Equal parts "rough" and "refined"

Our ***Raw Diamond Necklace*** is a balanced blend of geology and geometry. Each one-of-a-kind raw diamond is fitted by hand into its "cage," a crisscross embrace of gold vermeil over the finest .925 sterling silver, bead-set with 18 round

diamonds. The caged diamond hangs from a triangular bail with an additional 8 diamonds (26 total). The pendant is suspended from an 18" gold vermeil rope chain with spring ring clasp. Each raw diamond is naturally unique. This is an extremely limited edition since it took us 3 years to find this small cache of stones.

Show off your Stauer ***Raw Diamond Necklace*** for 30 days. If you're not feeling the rush of raw, large diamonds, simply return it for a full refund of your purchase price. But if you feel like experiencing the unique perfection of natural uncut beauty, you have found the way.

Keep in mind that each raw diamond is completely different. The shape, shine and color will vary. But your caged Raw Diamond Necklace will forever remain a reminder of the unspoiled, organic beauty of nature.

Stauer Raw Diamond Necklace *only* $295 +s&h
(2 carat minimum for raw stone)
***Also available*—5 carat raw diamond in solid 14K gold**
Please call for details.
Call now to take advantage of this limited offer.

1-800-806-1674

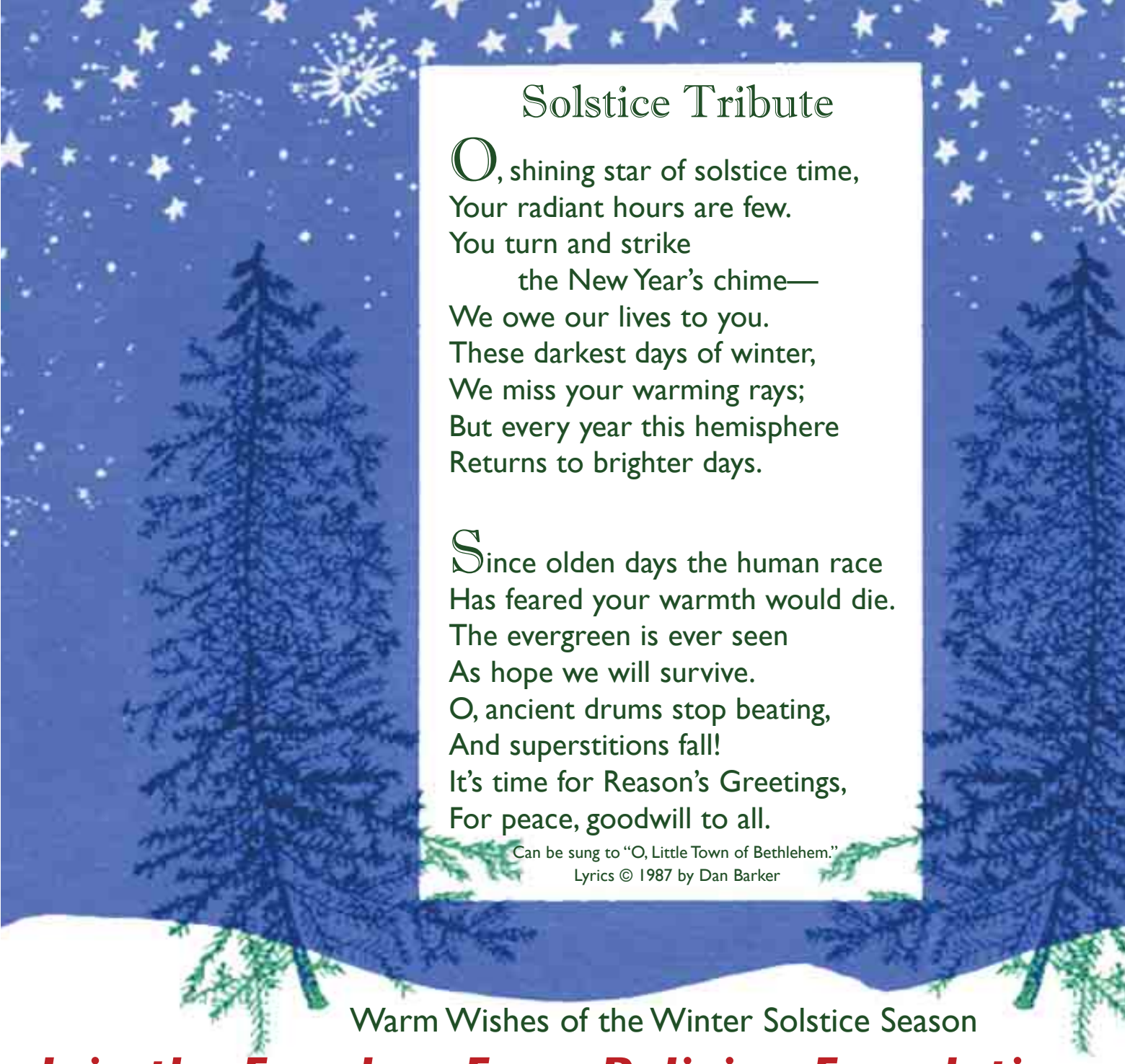
Promotional Code RDN168-02
Please mention this code when you call.

Stauer
Heritage of Art & Science

14101 Southcross Drive W.,
Dept. RDN168-02
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337
www.stauer.com

Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Solstice Tribute

O, shining star of solstice time,
Your radiant hours are few.
You turn and strike
the New Year's chime—
We owe our lives to you.
These darkest days of winter,
We miss your warming rays;
But every year this hemisphere
Returns to brighter days.

Since olden days the human race
Has feared your warmth would die.
The evergreen is ever seen
As hope we will survive.
O, ancient drums stop beating,
And superstitions fall!
It's time for Reason's Greetings,
For peace, goodwill to all.

Can be sung to "O, Little Town of Bethlehem."
Lyrics © 1987 by Dan Barker

Warm Wishes of the Winter Solstice Season

Join the Freedom From Religion Foundation

Make secular activism your New Year's resolution. Join the nation's largest association of freethinkers (atheists and agnostics), working since 1978 to keep state & church separate. Ask for a sample issue of Freethought Today.

P.O. Box 750-N • Madison WI 53701 • (800) 335-4021

ffrf.org

☐ I would like to become a member. *(Includes 10 issues of* ***Freethought Today*** *newspaper.)*

☐ I would also like to donate to FFRF's Legal Fund.

Make check to "FFRF, Inc."

Dues & donations are tax-deductible.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip *Phone/Email*

Annual Membership Dues	
☐ Individual	$40
☐ Household	$50
☐ Sustaining	$100
☐ Sponsoring	$500
☐ Life Member	$1,000
☐ "After Life"	$5,000
☐ Student	$25

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED